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MEMOIRS

OF

JOSEPH GRIMALDI.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

MEMOIRS

OF

JOSEPH GRIMALDI.

EDITED BY

"BOZ."

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

24372 a

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1838.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

It is some years now, since we first conceived a strong veneration for Clowns, and an intense anxiety to know what they did with themselves out of pantomime time, and off the stage. As a child, we were accustomed to pester our relations and friends with questions out of number concerning these gentry;—whether their appetite for sausages and such like wares was always the same, and if so, at whose expense they were maintained; whether they were ever taken up for pilfering other people's goods, or were forgiven by everybody because it was only done in fun; how it was they got such beautiful complexions, and where they lived; and whether they were born Clowns, or gradually turned into Clowns as they grew up. On these and a thousand other points our curiosity was insatiable. Nor were

our speculations confined to Clowns alone: they extended to Harlequins, Pantaloons, and Columbines, all of whom we believed to be real and veritable personages, existing in the same forms and characters all the year round. How often have we wished that the Pantaloon were our godfather! and how often thought that to marry a Columbine would be to attain the highest pitch of all human felicity!

The delights—the ten thousand million delights of a pantomime—come streaming upon us now,—even of the pantomime which came lumbering down in Richardson's waggons at fair-time to the dull little town in which we had the honour to be brought up, and which a long row of small boys, with frills as white as they could be washed, and hands as clean as they would come, were taken to behold the glories of, in fair daylight.

We feel again all the pride of standing in a body on the platform, the observed of all observers in the crowd below, while the junior usher pays away twenty-four ninepences to a stout gentleman under a Gothic arch, with a hoop of variegated lamps swinging over his head. Again we catch a glimpse (too brief, alas!) of the lady with a green

parasol in her hand, on the outside stage of the next show but one, who supports herself on one foot, on the back of a majestic horse, blotting-paper coloured and white; and once again our eyes open wide with wonder, and our hearts throb with emotion, as we deliver our card-board check into the very hands of the Harlequin himself, who, all glittering with spangles, and dazzling with many colours, deigns to give us a word of encouragement and commendation as we pass into the booth!

But what was this—even this—to the glories of the inside, where, amid the smell of saw-dust, and orange-peel, sweeter far than violets to youthful noses, the first play being over, the lovers united, the Ghost appeased, the Baron killed, and everything made comfortable and pleasant,—the pantomime itself began! What words can describe the deep gloom of the opening scene, where a crafty Magician holding a young lady in bondage was discovered, studying an enchanted book to the soft music of a gong!—or in what terms can we express the thrill of ecstasy with which, his magic power opposed by superior art, we beheld the monster himself converted into

Clown! What mattered it that the stage was three yards wide, and four deep? *we* never saw it. We had no eyes, ears, or corporeal senses but for the pantomime. And when its short career was run, and the Baron previously slaughtered, coming forward with his hand upon his heart, announced that for that favour Mr. Richardson returned his most sincere thanks, and the performances would commence again in a quarter of an hour, what jest could equal the effects of the Baron's indignation and surprise, when the Clown, unexpectedly peeping from behind the curtain, requested the audience "not to believe it, for it was all gammon!" Who but a Clown could have called forth the roar of laughter that succeeded; and what witchery but a Clown's could have caused the junior usher himself to declare aloud, as he shook his sides and smote his knee in a moment of irrepressible joy, that that was the very best thing he had ever heard said!

We have lost that Clown now;—he is still alive though, for we saw him only the day before last Bartholomew Fair, eating a real saveloy, and we are sorry to say he had deserted to the illegitimate drama, for he was seated on one of "Clark's

Circus" waggons :—we have lost that Clown and that pantomime, but our relish for the entertainment still remains unimpaired. Each successive Boxing-day finds us in the same state of high excitement and expectation. On that eventful day, when new pantomimes are played for the first time at the two great theatres, and at twenty or thirty of the little ones, we still gloat as formerly upon the bills which set forth tempting descriptions of the scenery in staring red and black letters, and still fall down upon our knees, with other men and boys, upon the pavement by shop-doors, to read them down to the very last line. Nay, we still peruse with all eagerness and avidity the exclusive accounts of the coming wonders in the theatrical newspapers of the Sunday before, and still believe them as devoutly as we did before twenty years' experience had shown us that they are always wrong.

With these feelings upon the subject of pantomimes, it is no matter of surprise that when we first heard that Grimaldi had left some memoirs of his life behind him, we were in a perfect fever until we had perused the manuscript. It was no sooner placed in our hands by "the adventurous

and spirited Publisher,"—(if our recollection serve us, this is the customary style of the complimentary little paragraphs regarding new books which usually precede advertisements about Savory's clocks in the newspapers,)—than we sat down at once and read it every word.

See how pleasantly things come about, if you let them take their own course! This mention of the manuscript brings us at once to the very point we are anxious to reach, and which we should have gained long ago, if we had not travelled into those irrelevant remarks concerning Pantomimic representations.

For about a year before his death, Grimaldi was employed in writing a full account of his life and adventures. It was his chief occupation and amusement; and as people who write their own lives, even in the midst of very many occupations, often find time to extend them to a most inordinate length, it is no wonder that his account of himself was exceedingly voluminous.

This manuscript was confided to Mr. Thomas Egerton Wilks, to alter and revise, with a view to its publication. Mr. Wilks, who was well ac-

quainted with Grimaldi and his connexions, applied himself to the task of condensing it throughout, and wholly expunging considerable portions, which, so far as the public were concerned, possessed neither interest nor amusement: he likewise interspersed here and there the substance of such personal anecdotes as he had gleaned from the writer in desultory conversation. While he was thus engaged, Grimaldi died.

Mr. Wilks having by the commencement of September concluded his labours, offered the manuscript to the present publisher, by whom it was shortly afterwards purchased unconditionally, with the full consent and concurrence of Mr. Richard Hughes, Grimaldi's executor.

The present Editor of these volumes has felt it necessary to say thus much in explanation of their origin, in order to establish beyond doubt the unquestionable authenticity of the memoirs they contain.

His own share in them is stated in a few words. Being much struck by several incidents in the manuscript—such as the description of Grimaldi's infancy, the burglary, the brother's return from

sea under the extraordinary circumstances detailed, the adventure of the man with the two fingers on his left hand, the account of Mackintosh and his friends, and many other passages,—and thinking that they might be related in a more attractive manner, (they were at that time told in the first person, as if by Grimaldi himself, although they had necessarily lost any original manner which his recital might have imparted to them;) he accepted a proposal from the publisher to edit the book, and *has* edited it to the best of his ability, altering its form throughout, and making such other alterations as he conceived would improve the narration of the facts, without any departure from the facts themselves.

He has merely to add, that there has been no *book-making* in this case. He has not swelled the quantity of matter, but materially abridged it. The account of Grimaldi's first courtship may appear lengthy in its present form; but it has undergone a double and most comprehensive process of abridgment. The old man was garrulous upon a subject on which the youth had felt so keenly; and as the feeling did him honour in both stages

of life, the Editor has not had the heart to reduce it further.

Here is the book, then, at last. After so much pains from so many hands—including the good right hand of GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, which has seldom been better exercised,—he humbly hopes it may find favour with the public.

DOUGHTY STREET,
February 1838.

MEMOIRS

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CHAPTER I.

His Grandfather and Father.—His Birth and first appearance at Drury Lane Theatre, and at Sadlers Wells.—His Father's severity.—Miss Farren.—The Earl of Derby and the Wig.—The Fortune-box and Charity's reward.—His Father's pretended death, and the behaviour of himself and his brother thereupon.

THE paternal grandfather of Joseph Grimaldi was well known, both to the French and Italian public, as an eminent dancer, possessing a most extraordinary degree of strength and agility,—qualities which, being brought into full play by the constant exercise of his frame in his professional duties, acquired for him the distinguishing appellation of "Iron Legs." Dibdin, in his History of

the Stage, relates several anecdotes of his prowess in these respects, many of which are current elsewhere, though the authority on which they rest would appear from his grandson's testimony to be somewhat doubtful; the best known of these, however, is perfectly true. Jumping extremely high one night in some performance on the stage, possibly in a fit of enthusiasm occasioned by the august presence of the Turkish Ambassador, who, with his suite, occupied the stage-box, he actually broke one of the chandeliers which in those times hung above the stage doors; and one of the glass drops was struck with some violence against the eye or countenance of the Turkish Ambassador aforesaid. The dignity of this great personage being much affronted, a formal complaint was made to the Court of France, who gravely commanded "Iron Legs" to apologise, which "Iron Legs" did in due form, to the great amusement of himself, and the court, and the public, and, in short, of everybody else but the exalted gentleman whose person had been grievously outraged. The mighty affair terminated in the appearance of a squib, which has been thus translated:—

" Hail, Iron Legs! immortal pair,
Agile, firm knit, and peerless,
That skim the earth, or vault in air,
Aspiring high and fearless.
Glory of Paris!, outdoing compeers,
Brave pair! may nothing hurt ye;
Scatter at will our chandeliers,
And tweak the nose of Turkey.
And should a too presumptuous foe
But dare these shores to land on,
His well-kicked men shall quickly know
We've Iron Legs to stand on."

This circumstance occurred on the French stage. The first Grimaldi who appeared in England was the father of the subject of these memoirs, and the son of " Iron Legs," who, holding the appointment of Dentist to Queen Charlotte, came to England in that capacity in 1760 : he was a native of Genoa, and long before his arrival in this country had attained considerable distinction in his profession. We have not many instances of the union of the two professions of dentist and dancing-master; but Grimaldi, possessing a taste for both pursuits, and a much higher relish for the latter than the former, obtained leave to resign his situation about the Queen, soon after his arrival in this country, and commenced giving lessons in dancing and

fencing, occasionally giving his pupils a taste of his quality in his old capacity. In those days of minuets and cotillions, private dancing was a much more laborious and serious affair than it is at present; and the younger branches of the nobility and gentry kept Mr. Grimaldi in pretty constant occupation. In many scattered notices of our Grimaldi's life, it has been stated that the father lost his situation at court in consequence of the rudeness of his behaviour, and some disrespect which he had shown the King; an accusation which his son always took very much to heart, and which the continual patronage of the King and Queen, bestowed upon him publicly, on all possible occasions, sufficiently proves to be unfounded.

His new career being highly successful, Mr. Grimaldi was appointed ballet-master of old Drury Lane Theatre and Sadlers Wells, with which he coupled the situation of primo buffo; in this double capacity he became a very great favourite with the public, and their majesties, who were nearly every week accustomed to command some pantomime of which "Grimaldi" was the hero. He bore the reputation of being a very

honest man, and a very charitable one, never turning a deaf ear to the entreaties of the distressed, but always willing, by every means in his power, to relieve the numerous reduced and wretched persons who applied to him for assistance. It may be added—and his son always mentioned it with just pride—that he was never known to be inebriated: a rather scarce virtue among players of later times, and one which men of far higher rank in their profession would do well to profit by.

He appears to have been a very singular and eccentric man. It would be difficult to account for the little traits of his character, which are developed in the earlier pages of this book, unless this circumstance were borne in mind. He purchased a small quantity of ground at Lambeth once, part of which was laid out as a garden; he entered into possession of it in the very depth of a most inclement winter, but he was so impatient to ascertain how this garden would look in full bloom, that, finding it quite impossible to wait till the coming of spring and summer gradually developed its beauties, he had it at once decorated with an immense quantity of artificial flowers, and the branches of all the

trees bent beneath the weight of the most luxuriant foliage, and the most abundant crops of fruit, all, it is needless to say, artificial also.

A singular trait in this individual's character, was a vague and profound dread of the 14th day of the month. At its approach he was always nervous, disquieted, and anxious: directly it had passed he was another man again, and invariably exclaimed, in his broken English, "Ah! Now I am safe for anoder month." If this circumstance were unaccompanied by any singular coincidence it would be scarcely worth mentioning; but it is remarkable that he actually died on the 14th day of March; and that he was born, christened, and married on the 14th of the month.

There are other anecdotes of the same kind told of Henry Quartre, and others; this one is undoubtedly true, and it may be added to the list of coincidences or presentiments, or by whatever name the reader pleases to call them, as a veracious and well-authenticated instance.

These are not the only odd characteristics of the man. He was a most morbidly sensitive and melancholy being, and entertained a horror of death almost indescribable. He was in the habit

of wandering about churchyards and burying places, for hours together, and would speculate on the diseases of which the persons whose remains occupied the graves he walked among, had died; figure their death-beds, and wonder how many of them had been buried alive in a fit or a trance: a possibility which he shuddered to think of, and which haunted him both through life and at its close. Such an effect had this fear upon his mind, that he left express directions in his will that, before his coffin should be fastened down, his head should be severed from his body, and the operation was actually performed in the presence of several persons.

It is a curious circumstance, that death, which always filled his mind with the most gloomy and horrible reflections, and which in his unoccupied moments can hardly be said to have been ever absent from his thoughts, should have been chosen by him as the subject of one of his most popular scenes in the pantomimes of the time. Among many others of the same nature, he invented the well-known skeleton scene for the clown, which was very popular in those days, and is still occasionally represented. Whether it be true,

that the hypochondriac is most prone to laugh at the things which most annoy and terrify him; in private, as a man who believes in the appearance of spirits upon earth is always the foremost to express his unbelief; or whether these gloomy ideas haunted the unfortunate man's mind so much, that even his merriment assumed a ghastly hue, and his comicality sought for grotesque objects in the grave and the charnel-house, the fact is equally remarkable.

This was the same man who, in the time of Lord George Gordon's riots, when people, for the purpose of protecting their houses from the fury of the mob, inscribed upon their doors the words "No Popery,"—actually, with the view of keeping in the right with all parties, and preventing the possibility of offending any by his form of worship, wrote up "No Religion at all;" which announcement appeared in large characters in front of his house, in Little Russel Street. The idea was perfectly successful; but whether from the humour of the description, or because the rioters did not happen to go down that particular street, we are unable to determine.

On the 18th of December 1779, the year in

which Garrick died, Joseph Grimaldi, "Old Joe," was born, in Stanhope Street, Clare Market; a part of the town then, as now, much frequented by theatrical people, in consequence of its vicinity to the Theatres. At the period of his birth his eccentric father was more than seventy years old, and twenty-five months afterwards another son was born to him,—Joseph's only brother.

The child did not remain very long in a state of helpless and unprofitable infancy, for at the age of one year and eleven months he was brought out by his father on the boards of Old Drury, where he made his first bow and his first tumble. The piece in which his precocious powers were displayed was the well-known pantomime of Robinson Crusoe, in which the father sustained the part of the Shipwrecked Mariner, and the son performed that of the Little Clown. The child's success was complete; he was instantly placed on the establishment, accorded a magnificent weekly salary of fifteen shillings, and every succeeding year was brought forward in some new and prominent part. He became a favourite behind the curtain as well as before it, being henceforth distinguished in the green-room as "Clever little

Joe ;" and Joe he was called to the last day of his life.

In 1782, he first appeared at Sadlers Wells, in the arduous character of a monkey ; and here he was fortunate enough to excite as much approbation, as he had previously elicited in the part of Clown at Drury Lane. He immediately became a member of the regular company at this theatre, as he had done at the other ; and here he remained, (one season only excepted) until the termination of his professional life, forty-nine years afterwards.

Now that he had made, or rather that his father had made for him, two engagements, by which he was bound to appear at two theatres on the same evening, and at very nearly the same time, his labours began in earnest. They would have been arduous for a man, much more so for a child ; and it will be obvious, that if at any one portion of his life his gains were very great, the actual toil both of mind and body by which they were purchased, was at least equally so. The stage-stricken young gentlemen who hang about Sadlers Wells, and Astley's, and the Surrey, and private theatres of all kinds, and who long to embrace the theatrical profession

because it is "so easy," little dream of all the anxieties, and hardships, and privations, and sorrows, which make the sum of most actors' lives.

We have already remarked that the father of Grimaldi was an eccentric man; he appears to have been peculiarly eccentric, and rather unpleasantly so, in the correction of his son. The child being bred up to play all kinds of fantastic tricks, was as much a clown, a monkey, or anything else that was droll and ridiculous, off the stage, as on it; and being incited thereto by the occupants of the green-room, used to skip and tumble about as much for their diversion as that of the public. All this was carefully concealed from the father, who, whenever he did happen to observe any of the child's pranks, always administered the same punishment—a sound thrashing; terminating in his being lifted up by the hair of the head, and stuck in a corner, whence his father, with a severe countenance and awful voice, would tell him "to venture to move at his peril."

Venture to move however he did, for no sooner would the father disappear, than all the cries and tears of the boy would disappear too; and with many of those winks and grins, which afterwards

became so popular, he would recommence his pantomime with greater vigour than ever; indeed nothing could ever stop him but the cry of "Joe! Joe! here 's your father!" upon which the boy would dart back into the old corner, and begin crying again as if he had never left off.

This became quite a regular amusement in course of time, and whether the father was coming or not, the caution used to be given for the mere pleasure of seeing "Joe" run back to his corner; this "Joe" very soon discovered, and, often confounding the warning with the joke, received more severe beatings than before, from him whom he very properly describes in his manuscript as his "severe, but excellent parent." On one of these occasions, when he was dressed for his favourite part of the little clown in Robinson Crusoe, with his face painted in exact imitation of his father's, which appears to have been part of the fun of the scene, the old gentleman brought him into the green-room, and, placing him in his usual solitary corner, gave him strict directions not to stir an inch, on pain of being thrashed, and left him.

The Earl of Derby, who was at that time in

the constant habit of frequenting the green-room, happened to walk in at the moment, and seeing a lonesome-looking little boy dressed and painted after a manner very inconsistent with his solitary air, good naturedly call him towards him.

"Hollo! here, my boy, come here!" said the Earl.

Joe made a wonderful and astonishing face, but remained where he was. The Earl laughed heartily, and looked round for an explanation.

"He dare not move!" explained Miss Farren, to whom his lordship was then much attached, and whom he afterwards married, "his father will beat him if he does."

"Indeed," said his lordship. At which Joe, by way of confirmation, made another face more extraordinary than his former contortions.

"I think," said his lordship, laughing again, "the boy is not quite so much afraid of his father as you suppose. Come here, sir!"

With this, he held up half-a-crown, and the child, perfectly well knowing the value of money, darted from his corner, seized it with pantomimic suddeness, and was darting back again, when the Earl caught him by the arm.

"Here, Joe!" said the Earl, "take off your wig and throw it in the fire, and here's another half-crown for you."

No sooner said than done. Off came the wig,—into the fire it went; a roar of laughter arose; the child capered about with a halfcrown in each hand; the Earl, alarmed for the consequences to the boy, busied himself to extricate the wig with the tongs and poker; and the father, in full dress for the Shipwrecked Mariner, rushed into the room at the same moment. It was luckily for "Little Joe" that Lord Derby promptly and humanely interfered, or it is exceedingly probable that his father would have prevented any chance of *his* being buried alive at all events, by killing him outright.

As it was, the matter could not be compromised without his receiving a smart beating, which made him cry very bitterly; and the tears running down his face, which was painted "an inch thick," came to the "complexion at last," in parts, and made him look as much like a little clown as like a little human being, to neither of which characters he bore the most distant resemblance. He was "called" almost immediately afterwards, and the father,

being in a violent rage, had not noticed the circumstance until the little object came on the stage, when a general roar of laughter directed his attention to his grotesque countenance. Becoming more violent than before, he fell upon him at once, and beat him severely, and the child roared vociferously. This was all taken by the audience as a most capital joke; shouts of laughter and peals of applause shook the house; and the newspapers next morning declared, that it was perfectly wonderful to see a mere child perform so naturally, and highly creditable to his father's talents as a teacher!

This is no bad illustration of some of the miseries of a poor actor's life. The jest on the lip and the tear in the eye, the merriment on the mouth and the aching of the heart, have called down the same shouts of laughter and peals of applause a hundred times. Characters in a state of starvation are almost invariably laughed at upon the stage;—the audience have had their dinner.

The bitterest portion of the boy's punishment, was the being deprived of the five shillings, which the excellent parent put into his own pocket, possibly because he received the child's salary also, and in order that everything might be,

as Goldsmith's Bear-leader has it, "in a concatenation accordingly." The Earl gave him half-a-crown every time he saw him afterwards though, and the child had good cause for regret when his lordship married Miss Farren, and left the green-room.

At Sadlers Wells he became a favourite almost as speedily as at Drury Lane. King the comedian, who was principal proprietor of the fomer theatre and acting manager of the latter, took a great deal of notice of him, and occasionally gave the child a guinea to buy a rocking-horse or a cart, or some toy that struck his fancy. During the run of the first piece in which he played at Sadlers Wells, he produced his first serious effect, which, but for the good fortune which seems to have attended him in such cases, might have prevented his subsequent appearance on any stage. He played a monkey, and had to accompany the clown (his father) throughout the piece. In one of the scenes, the clown used to lead him on by a chain attached to his waist, and with this chain he would swing him round and round, at arm's length, with the utmost velocity. One evening, when this feat was in the act of performance, the chain broke, and he was

hurled a considerable distance into the pit, fortunately without sustaining the slightest injury; for he was flung by a miracle into the very arms of an old gentleman who was sitting gazing at the stage with intense interest.

Among the many persons who in this early stage of his career behaved with great kindness to him, were, the famous rope-dancers, Mr. and Mrs. Ridge, then called Le petit Diable, and La belle Espagnole; who often gave him a guinea to buy some childish luxury, which his father invariably took away and deposited in a box, with his name written outside, which he would lock very carefully, and then, giving the boy the key, say, "Mind, Joe, ven I die, dat is your vortune." Eventually he lost both the box and the fortune, as will hereafter appear.

As he had now nearly four months vacant out of every twelve, the run of the Christmas pantomime at Drury Lane seldom exceeding a month, and Sadlers Wells not opening until Easter, he was sent for that period of the year to a boarding-school at Putney, kept by a Mr. Ford, of whose kindness and goodness of heart to him on a later occasion of his life, he spoke, when an old man,

with the deepest gratitude. He fell in here with many school-fellows who afterwards became connected one way or another with dramatic pursuits, among whom was Mr. Henry Harris, of Covent Garden Theatre. We do not find that any of these school-fellows afterwards became pantomime actors; but recollecting the humour and vivacity of the boy, the wonder to us is, that they were not all clowns when they grew up.

In the Christmas of 1782 he appeared in his second character at Drury Lane, called "Harlequin Junior, or the Magic Cestus," in which he represented a demon, sent by some opposing magician to counteract the power of the harlequin. In this, as in his preceding part, he was fortunate enough to meet with great applause; and from this period his reputation was made, although it naturally increased with his years, strength, and improvement.

In the following Easter he repeated the monkey at Sadlers Wells without the pit effect. As the piece was withdrawn at the end of a month, and he had nothing to do for the remainder of the season, he again repaired to Putney.

In Christmas 1783 he once more appeared at

Drury Lane, in a pantomime called "Hurly Burley." In this piece he had to represent, not only the old part of the monkey, but that of a cat besides; and in sustaining the latter character he met with an accident, his speedy recovery from which would almost induce one to believe that he had so completely identified himself with the character as to have eight additional chances for his life. The dress he wore was so clumsily contrived that when it was sewn upon him he could not see before him; consequently, as he was running about the stage, he fell down a trap-door, which had been left open to represent a well, and tumbled a distance of forty feet, thereby breaking his collar-bone, and inflicting several contusions upon his body. He was immediately conveyed home, and placed under the care of a surgeon, but he did not recover soon enough to appear any more that season at Drury Lane, although at Easter he performed at Sadlers Wells as usual.

In the summer of this year he used to be allowed, as a mark of high and special favour, to spend every alternate Sunday at the house of his mother's father, "who," says Grimaldi himself, "resided in Newton Street, Holborn, and was a

carcase butcher, doing a prodigious business; besides which, he kept the Bloomsbury slaughter-house, and, at the time of his death, had done so for more than sixty years." With this grandfather "Joe" was a great favourite; and as he was very much indulged and petted when he went to see him, he used to look forward to every visit with great anxiety. His father, upon his part, was most anxious that he should support the credit of the family upon these occasions, and, after great deliberation, and much consultation with tailors, the "little clown" was attired for one of these Sunday excursions in the following style. On his back he wore a green coat, embroidered with almost as many artificial flowers as his father had put in the garden at Lambeth; beneath this there shone a satin waistcoat of dazzling whiteness; and beneath that again were a pair of green cloth breeches (the word existed in those days) richly embroidered. His legs were fitted into white silk stockings, and his feet into shoes with brilliant paste buckles, of which he also wore another resplendent pair at his knees: he had a laced shirt, cravat, and ruffles; a cocked-hat upon his head; a small watch set with diamonds—theatri-

George Cruikshanks

cal, we suppose — in his fob; and a little cane in his hand, which he switched to and fro as our clowns may do now.

Being thus thoroughly equipped for starting, he was taken in for his father's inspection: the old gentleman was pleased to signify his entire approbation with his appearance, and, after kissing him in the moment of his gratification, demanded the key of the "fortune-box." The key being got with some difficulty out of one of the pockets of the green smalls, the bottom of which might be somewhere near the buckles, the old gentleman took a guinea out of the box, and, putting it into the boy's pocket, said, "Dere now, you are a gentleman, and something more,—you have got a guinea in your pocket." The box having been carefully locked, and the key returned to the owner of the "fortune," off he started, receiving strict injunctions to be home by eight o'clock. The father would not allow anybody to attend him, on the ground that he was a gentleman, and consequently perfectly able to take care of himself; so away he went, to walk all the way from Little Russel Street, Drury Lane, to Newton Street, Holborn.

The child's appearance in the street excited considerable curiosity, as the appearance of any other child, alone, in such a costume, might very probably have done; but he was a public character besides, and the astonishment was proportionate. "Hollo!" cried one boy, "here's 'Little Joe!'" "Get along," said another, "it's the monkey." A third thought it was the "bear dressed for a dance;" and the fourth suggested "it might be the cat going out to a party," while the more sedate passengers could not help laughing heartily, and saying how ridiculous it was to trust such a child in the streets alone. However, he walked on, with various singular grimaces, until he stopped to look at a female of miserable appearance, who was reclining on the pavement, and whose diseased and destitute aspect had already collected a crowd. The boy stopped, like others, and hearing her tale of distress, became so touched, that he thrust his hand into his pocket, and having at last found the bottom of it, pulled out his guinea, which was the only coin he had, and slipped it into her hand; then away he walked again with a greater air than before.

The sight of the embroidered coat and breeches

and the paste buckles, and the satin waistcoat and cocked-hat, had astonished the crowd not a little in the outset; but directly it was understood that the small owner of these articles had given the woman a guinea, a great number of people collected around him, and began shouting and staring by turns most earnestly. The boy, not at all abashed, headed the crowd, and walked on very deliberately, with a train a street or two long behind him, until he fortunately encountered a friend of his father's, who no sooner saw the concourse that attended him, than he took him in his arms and carried him, despite a few kicks and struggles, in all his brilliant attire, to his grandfather's house, where he spent the day very much to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

When he got safely home at night, the father referred to his watch, and finding that he had returned home punctual to the appointed time, kissed him, extolled him for paying such strict attention to his instructions, examined his dress, discovered satisfactorily that no injury had been done to his clothes, and concluded by asking for the key of the "fortune-box" and the guinea. The boy, at first, quite forgot the morning adven-

ture; but after rummaging all his pockets for the guinea, and not finding it, he recollected what had occurred, and, falling upon the knees of the knee-smalls, confessed it all, and implored forgiveness.

The father was puzzled; he was always giving away money in charity himself, and he could scarcely reprimand the child for doing the same. He looked at him for some seconds with a perplexed countenance, and then, contenting himself with simply saying, "I 'll beat you," sent him to bed.

Among the eccentricities of the old gentleman, one — certainly not his most amiable one — was, that whatever he promised he performed; and that when, as in this case, he promised to thrash the boy, he would very coolly let the matter stand over for months, but never forget it in the end. This was ingenious, inasmuch as it doubled, or trebled, or quadrupled the punishment, giving the unhappy little victim all the additional pain of anticipating it for a long time, with the certainty of enduring it in the end. Four or five months after this occurrence, and when the child had not given his father any new cause of offence, he suddenly called him to him one day, and communicated the

intelligence that he was going to beat him forthwith. Hereupon the boy began to cry most piteously, and faltered forth the inquiry, "Oh! father, what for?"—"Remember the guinea!" said the father. And he gave him a caning which he remembered to the last day of his life.

The family consisted at this time of the father, mother, Joe, his only brother John Baptist, three or four female servants, and a man of colour who acted as footman, and was dignified with the appellation of "Black Sam."

The father was extremely hospitable, and fond of company: he rarely dined alone, and on certain gala days, of which Christmas Eve was one, had a very large party, upon which occasions his really splendid service of plate, together with various costly articles of *bijouterie*, was laid out for the admiration of the guests. Upon one Christmas Eve, when the dining-parlour was decorated and prepared with all due gorgeousness and splendour, the two boys, accompanied by Black Sam, stole into it, and began to pass various encomiums on its beautiful appearance.

"Ah!" said Sam in reply to some remark of the

brothers, " and when old Massa die, all dese fine things vill be yours."

Both the boys were much struck with this remark, and especially John, the younger, who, being extremely young, probably thought much less about death than his father, and accordingly exclaimed without the lest reserve or delicacy, that he should be exceedingly glad if all these fine things were his.

Nothing more was said upon the subject. Black Sam went to his work, the boys commenced a game of play, and nobody thought any more of the matter except the father himself, who, passing the door of the room at the moment the remarks were made, distinctly heard them. He pondered over the matter for some days, and at length, with the view of ascertaining the dispositions of his two sons, formed a singular resolution, still connected with the topic ever upwards in his mind, and determined to feign himself dead. He caused himself to be laid out in the drawing-room, covered with a sheet, and had the room darkened, the windows closed, and all the usual ceremonies which accompany death, performed. All this being done, and the servants duly instructed, the two boys were

cautiously informed that their father had died suddenly, and were at once hurried into the room where he lay, in order that he might hear them give vent to their real feelings.*

When Joe was brought into the dark room on so short a notice, his sensations were rather complicated, but they speedily resolved themselves into a firm persuasion that his father was not dead. A variety of causes led him to this conclusion, among which the most prominent were, his having very recently seen his father in the best health; and besides several half-suppressed winks and blinks from Black Sam, his observing, by looking closely at the sheet, that his deceased parent still breathed. With very little hesitation the boy perceived what line of conduct he ought to adopt, and at once bursting into a roar of the most distracted grief, flung himself upon the floor, and rolled about in a seeming transport of anguish.

John, not having seen so much of public life as his brother, was not so cunning, and perceiving in his father's death nothing but a relief from flog-

* A similar scene has been frequently represented on the stage. It is probable that the father derived the notion from some play in which he had acted, or which he had seen performed.

ging and books (for both of which he had a great dislike), and the immediate possession of all the plate in the dining-room, skipped about the room, indulging in various snatches of song, and, snapping his fingers, declared that he was glad to hear it.

"O! you cruel boy," said Joe, in a passion of tears, "hadn't you any love for your dear father? O, what would I give to see him alive again!"

"O! never mind," replied the brother, "don't be such a fool as to cry; we can have the cuckoo clock all to ourselves now."

This was more than the deceased could bear. He jumped from the bier, opened the shutters, threw off the sheet, and attacked his younger son most unmercifully; while Joe, not knowing what might be his own fate, ran and hid himself in the coal-cellar, where he was discovered some four hours afterwards, by Black Sam, fast asleep, who carried him to his father, who had been anxiously in search of him, and by whom he was received with every demonstration of affection, as the son who truly and sincerely loved him.

From this period, up to the year 1788, he continued regularly employed upon the same salaries as he had originally received both at Drury Lane and Sadler's Wells.

CHAPTER II.

1788 to 1794.

The Father's real Death.—His Will, and failure of the Executor.—Generous conduct of Grimaldi's Schoolmaster, and of Mr. Wroughton the Comedian.— Kindness of Sheridan. —Grimaldi's industry and amusements.—Fly catching.— Expedition in search of the "Dartford Blues."—Mrs. Jordan.—Adventure on Clapham Common; the piece of Tin. —His first love and its consequences.

It has been stated in several publications that Grimaldi's father died in 1787. It would appear from several passages in the memoranda dictated by his son, that he expired on the 14th of March 1788, of dropsy, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, and that he was interred in the burial-ground attached to Exmouth-street chapel; a spot of ground in which, if it bore any resemblance at that time to its present condition, he could have had very little room to walk about and meditate when alive. He left a will, by which he directed all his effects and jewels to be sold by public auction,

and the proceeds to be added to his funded property, which exceeded 15,000*l.*; the whole of the gross amount, he directed should be divided equally between the two brothers as they respectively attained their majority. Mr. King, to whom allusion has already been named, was appointed co-executor with a Mr. Joseph Hopwood, a lace-manufacturer in Long Acre, at that time supposed to possess not only an excellent business, but independent property to a considerable amount besides. Shortly after they entered upon their office, in consequence of Mr. King declining to act, the whole of the estate fell to the management of Mr. Hopwood, who, employing the whole of the brothers' capital in his trade, became a bankrupt within a year, fled from England, and was never heard of afterwards. By this unfortunate and unforeseen event, the brothers lost the whole of their fortune, and were thrown upon their own resources and exertions for the means of subsistence.

It is very creditable to all parties, and while it speaks highly for the kind feeling of the friends of the widow, and her two sons, bears high testimony to their conduct and behaviour, that no sooner

was the failure of the executor known than offers of assistance were heaped upon them from all quarters. Mr. Ford, the Putney schoolmaster, offered at once to receive Joseph into his school, and to adopt him as his own son; this offer being declined by his mother, Mr. Sheridan, who was then proprietor of Drury Lane theatre, raised the boy's salary, unasked, to one pound per week, and permitted his mother, who was and had been from her infancy a dancer at that establishment, to accept a similar engagement at Sadlers Wells, which was, in fact, equivalent to a double salary, both theatres being open together for a considerable period of the year.

At Sadlers Wells, where Joseph appeared as usual in 1788, shortly after his father's death, they were not so liberal, nor was the aspect of things so pleasing, his salary of fifteen shillings a-week being very unceremoniously cut down to three, and his mother being politely informed upon her remonstrating, that if the alteration did not suit her, he was at perfect liberty to transfer his valuable services to any other house. Small as the pittance was, they could not afford to refuse it; and at that salary he remained at Sadlers

Wells for three years, occasionally superintending the property-room, sometimes assisting in the carpenter's, and sometimes in the painter's, and, in fact, lending a hand wherever it was most needed.

When the defalcation of the executor took place, the family were compelled to give up their comfortable establishment, and to seek for lodgings of an inferior description. His mother knowing a Mr. and Mrs. Bailey, who then resided in Great Wild Street, and who let lodgings, applied to them, and there they lived, in three rooms on the first floor, for several years. The brother could not be prevailed upon to accept any regular engagement, for he thought and dreamt of nothing but going to sea, and evinced the utmost detestation of the stage. Sometimes, when boys were wanted in the play at Drury Lane, he was sent for, and attended, for which he received a shilling per night; but so great was his unwillingness and evident dissatisfaction on such occasions, that Mr. Wroughton, the comedian, who, by purchasing the property of Mr. King, became about this period proprietor of Sadlers Wells, stepped forward in the boy's behalf, and obtained for him a situation on board an East-Indiaman which

then lay in the river, and was about to sail almost immediately.

John was delighted when the prospect of realizing his ardent wishes opened upon him so suddenly; but his raptures were diminished by the discovery that an outfit was indispensable, and that it would cost upwards of fifty pounds: a sum which, it is scarcely necessary to say, his friends, in their reduced position, could not command. But the same kind-hearted gentleman removed this obstacle, and with a generosity and readiness which enhanced the value of the gift an hundredfold, advanced, without security or obligation, the whole sum required, merely saying, "Mind, John, when you come to be a captain you must pay it me back again."

There is no difficulty in providing the necessaries for a voyage to any part of the world when you have provided the first and most important—money. In two days John took his leave of his mother and brother, and with his outfit, or kit, was safely deposited on board the vessel in which a berth had been procured for him; but the boy, who was of a rash, hasty, and inconsiderate temper, finding, on going on board, that a delay of

ten days would take place before the ship sailed, and that a king's ship, which lay near her, was just then preparing to drop down to Gravesend with the tide, actually swam from his own ship to the other, entered himself as a seaman or cabin-boy on board the latter in some feigned name, — what it was his friends never heard, — and so sailed immediately, leaving every article of his outfit, down to the commonest necessary of wearing apparel, on board the East-Indiaman, on the books of which he had been entered through the kindness of Mr. Wroughton. He disappeared in 1789, and he was not heard of, or from, or seen, for fourteen years afterwards.

At this period of his life Joseph was far from idle: he had to walk from Drury Lane to Sadlers Wells every morning to attend rehearsals, which then began at ten o'clock; to be back at Drury Lane to dinner by two, or go without it; to be back again at Sadlers Wells in the evening, in time for the commencement of the performances at six o'clock; to go through uninterrupted labour from that time until eleven o'clock, or later; and then to walk home again, repeat-

edly after having changed his dress twenty times in the course of the night.

For some years his life went on quietly enough, possessing very little of anecdote or interest beyond his steady and certain rise in his profession and in the estimation of the public, which, although very important to him from the money he afterwards gained by it, and to the public from the amusement which his peculiar excellence yielded them for so many years, offers no material for our present purpose. This gradual progress in the good opinion of the town exercised a material influence on his receipts; for, in 1794, his salary at Drury Lane was trebled, while his salary at Sadlers Wells had risen from three shillings per week to four pounds. He lodged in Great Wild Street with his mother all this time: their landlord had died, and the widow's daughter, from accompanying Mrs. Grimaldi to Sadler's Wells theatre, had formed an acquaintance with and married Mr. Robert Fairbrother of that establishment and Drury Lane, upon which Mrs. Bailey, the widow, took Mr. Fairbrother into partnership as a furrier, in which pursuit, by indus-

try and perseverance, he became eminently successful.

This circumstance would be scarcely worth mentioning, but that it shows the industry and perseverance of Grimaldi, and the ease with which, by the exercise of those qualities, a very young person may overcome all the disadvantages and temptations incidental to the most precarious walk of a most precarious pursuit, and become a useful and respectable member of society. He earned many a guinea from Mr. Fairbrother by working at his trade, and availing himself of his instruction in his leisure hours; and when he could do nothing in that way, he would go to Newton Street and assist his uncle and cousin, the carcase butchers, for nothing; such was his unconquerable antipathy to being idle. He does not inform us whether it required a practical knowledge of trade to display that skill and address with which, in his subsequent prosperity, he would diminish the joints of his customers as a baker, or increase the weight of their meat as a butcher, but we hope, for the credit of trade, that his morals in this respect were wholly imaginary.

These were his moments of occupation, but he

contrived to find moments of amusement besides, which were devoted to the breeding of pigeons and collecting of insects, which latter amusement he pursued with such success as to form a cabinet containing no fewer than 4000 specimens of flies, "collected," he says, "at the expense of a great deal of time, a great deal of money, and a great deal of vast and actual labour,"—for all of which, no doubt, the entomologist will deem him sufficiently rewarded. He appears in old age to have entertained a peculiar relish for the recollection of these pursuits, and calls to mind a part of Surrey where there was a very famous fly, and a part of Kent where there was another famous fly; one of these was called the Camberwell Beauty, (which he adds was very ugly,) and another the Dartford Blue, by which Dartford Blue, he seems to have set great store; and which were pursued and caught in manner following, in June 1794, when they regularly make their first appearance for the season.

Being engaged nightly at Sadlers Wells, he was obliged to wait till he had finished his business upon the stage; then he returned home, had supper, and shortly after midnight started off to

walk to Dartford, fifteen miles from town. Here he arrived about five o'clock in the morning, and calling upon a friend of the name of Brooks, who lived in the neighbourhood, and who was already stirring, he rested, breakfasted, and sallied forth into the fields. His search was not very profitable however, for after some hours, he only succeeded in bagging or bottling one "Dartford Blue," with which he returned to his friend perfectly satisfied. At one o'clock he bade his friend good b'ye, walked back to town, reached London by five, washed, took tea, and hurried to Sadlers Wells. No time was to be lost,—the fact of the appearance of the "Dartford Blues" having been thoroughly established,—in securing more specimens; so on the same night, directly the pantomime was over, and supper over too, off he walked down to Dartford again, found the friend up again, took a hasty breakfast again, and resumed his search again. Meeting with better sport, and capturing no fewer than four dozen Dartford Blues, he hurried back to the friend's; set them—an important process, which consists in placing the insects in the position in which their natural beauty can be best displayed,—started off with the Dartford Blues in his

pocket for London once more, reached home by four o'clock in the afternoon, washed, and took a hasty meal, and then went to the theatre for the evening's performance. As not half the necessary number of Blues had been taken, he had decided upon another visit to Dartford that same night, and was consequently much pleased to find that, from some unforeseen circumstance the pantomime was to be played first. By this means he was enabled to leave London at nine o'clock, to reach Dartford at one, to find a bed and supper ready, to meet a kind reception from his friend, and finally to turn into bed, a little tired with the two days' exertions. The next day was Sunday, so that he could indulge himself without being obliged to return to town, and in the morning he caught more flies than he wanted; so the rest of the day was devoted to quiet sociality. He went to bed at ten o'clock, rose early next morning, walked comfortably to town, and at noon was perfect in his part at the rehearsal on the stage at Drury Lane theatre.

It is probable that by such means as these, united to temperance and sobriety, Grimaldi acquired many important bodily requisites for the

perfection which he afterwards attained. But his love of entomology, or exercise, was not the only inducement in the case of the Dartford Blues; he had, he says, another strong motive, and this was, the having promised a little collection of insects to "one of the most charming women of her age," —the lamented Mrs. Jordan, at that time a member of the Drury Lane company.

Upon one occasion he had held under his arm, during a morning rehearsal, a box containing some specimens of flies: Mrs. Jordan was much interested to know what could possibly be in the box that Grimaldi carried about with him with so much care, and would not lose sight of for an instant, and in reply to her inquiry whether it contained anything pretty, he replied by exhibiting the flies.

He does not say whether these particular flies, which Mrs. Jordan admired, were Dartford Blues, or not; but he gives us to understand that his skill in preserving and arranging insects was really very great, that all this trouble and fatigue were undertaken in a spirit of respectful gallantry to the most winning person of her time, and that having requested permission previously, he pre-

sented two frames of insects to Mrs. Jordan, on the first day of the new season, and immediately after she had finished the rehearsal of Rosalind in "As you like it." That Mrs. Jordan was delighted, that he was at least equally so, that she took the frames away in her carriage, and warmed his heart by telling him that his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence considered the flies equal, if not superior to any of the kind he had ever seen.

His only other companion in these trips, besides his Dartford friend, was Robert Gomery, or "friend Bob," as he was called by his intimates, at that time an actor at Sadlers Wells, and for many years afterwards a public favourite at the various minor theatres of the metropolis; who is now, or was lately, enjoying a handsome independence at Bath. With this friend he had a little adventure, which it was his habit to relate with great glee.

One day he had been fly-hunting with his friend from early morning until night, thinking of nothing but flies, until at length their thoughts naturally turning to something more substantial, they halted for refreshment.

"Bob," said Grimaldi, "I am very hungry."

"So am I," said Bob.

"There is a public-house," said Grimaldi.

"It is *just* the very thing," observed the other.

It was a very neat public-house, and would have answered the purpose admirably, but Grimaldi having no money, and very much doubting whether his friend had either, did not respond to the sentiment quite so cordially as he might have done.

"We had better go in,"—said the friend; "it is getting late—*you* pay."

"No, no! you."

"I would in a minute," said his friend, "but I have not got any money."

Grimaldi thrust his hand into his right pocket with one of his queerest faces, then into his left, then into his coat pockets, then into his waistcoat, and finally took off his hat and looked into that; but there was no money anywhere.

They still walked on towards the public-house, meditating with rueful countenances, when Grimaldi spying something lying at the foot of a tree, picked it up, and suddenly exclaimed, with a variety of winks and nods, "Here 's a sixpence."

The hungry friend's eyes brightened, but they quickly resumed their gloomy expression as he rejoined, "It 's a piece of tin !"

Grimaldi winked again, rubbed the sixpence or the piece of tin very hard, and declared, putting it between his teeth by way of test, that it was as good a sixpence as he would wish to see.

"I don't think it," said the friend, shaking his head.

"I'll tell you what," said Grimaldi, "we'll go to the public-house, and ask the landlord whether it 's a good one or not. They always know."

To this the friend assented, and they hurried on, disputing all the way whether it was really a sixpence or not; a discovery which could not be made at that time, when the currency was defaced and worn nearly plain, with the ease with which it could be made at present.

The publican, a fat jolly fellow, was standing at his door, talking to a friend, and the house looked so uncommonly comfortable, that Gomery whispered as they approached, that perhaps it might be best to have some bread and cheese first, and ask about the sixpence afterwards.

Grimaldi nodded his entire assent, and they

went in and ordered some bread and cheese, and beer. Having taken the edge off their hunger, they tossed up a farthing which Grimaldi happened to find in the corner of some theretofore undiscovered pocket, to determine who should present the "sixpence." The chance falling on himself, he walked up to the bar, and with a very lofty air, and laying the questionable metal down with a dignity quite his own, requested the landlord to take the bill out of that.

"Just right, sir," said the landlord, looking at the strange face that his customer assumed, and not at the sixpence.

"It 's right sir, is it?" asked Grimaldi sternly.

"Quite," answered the landlord; "thank yē, gentlemen." And with this he slipped the,—whatever it was,—into his pocket.

Gomery looked at Grimaldi, and Grimaldi, with a look and air which baffle all description, walked out of the house followed by his friend.

"I never knew anything so lucky," he said as they walked home to supper,—"it was quite a Providence that sixpence."

"A piece of tin, you mean," said Gomery.

Which of the two it was, is uncertain, but

Grimaldi often patronized the same house afterwards, and as he never heard anything more about the matter, he felt quite convinced that it was a real good sixpence.

In the early part of the year 1794, they quitted their lodgings in Great Wild Street, and took a six-roomed house, in Penton Place, Pentonville, with a garden attached; a part of this they let off to a Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, who then belonged to Sadlers Wells; and in this manner they lived for three years, during the whole of which period his salaries steadily rose in amount, and he began to consider himself quite independent.

At Easter, Sadlers Wells opened as usual, and making a great hit in a new part, his fame rapidly increased. At this time he found a new acquaintance which exercised a material influence upon his comfort and happiness for many years. The intimacy commenced thus:—

When there was a rehearsal at Sadlers Wells, his mother, who was engaged there as well as himself, was in the habit of remaining at the theatre all day, taking her meals in her dressing-room, and occupying herself with needle-work. This she had done to avoid the long walk in the

middle of the day from Sadlers Wells to Great Wild Street, and back again almost directly. It became a habit, and when they had removed to Penton Place, and consequently were so much nearer the theatre that it was no longer necessary, it still continued. Mr. Hughes, who had now become principal proprietor of the theatre, and who lived in the house attached to it, had several children, the eldest of whom was Miss Maria Hughes, a young lady of considerable accomplishments, who had always been much attached to Grimaldi's mother, and who embraced every opportunity of being in her society. Knowing the hours at which she was in the dressing-room during the day, Miss Hughes was in the habit of taking her work, and sitting with her from three or four o'clock until six, when the other female performers beginning to arrive, she retired. Grimaldi was generally at the theatre between four and five, always taking tea with his mother at the last-named hour, and sitting with her until the arrival of the ladies broke up the little party. In this way an intimacy arose between Miss Hughes and himself, which ultimately ripened into feelings of a warmer nature.

The day after he made his great hit in the new piece, he went as usual to tea in the dressing-room, where Mrs. Lewis, their lodger, who was the wardrobe-keeper of the theatre, happening to be present, overwhelmed him with compliments on his great success. Miss Hughes was there too, but she said nothing for a long time, and Grimaldi, who would rather have heard her speak for a minute than Mrs. Lewis for an hour, listened as patiently as he could to the encomiums which the good woman lavished upon him. At length she stopped, as the best talkers must now and then, to take breath, and then Miss Hughes, looking up said, with some hesitation, that she thought Mr. Grimaldi had played the part uncommonly well; so well that she was certain there was no one who could have done it at all like him.

Now, before he went into the room, he had turned the matter over in his mind, and had come to the conclusion, that if Miss Hughes praised his acting, he would reply with some neatly-turned compliment to her, which might afford some hint of the state of his feelings; and with this view he had considered of a good many very smart ones, but somehow or other, the young lady no sooner

opened her lips in speech, than Grimaldi opened his in admiration, and out flew all the compliments in empty breath, without producing the slightest sound. He turned very red, looked very funny, and felt very foolish. At length he made an awkward bow, and turned to leave the room.

It was six o'clock, and the lady performers just then came in. As he was always somewhat of a favourite among them, a few of the more volatile and giddy, — for there are a few such, in almost all companies, theatrical or otherwise, — began first to praise his acting, and then to rally him upon another subject.

" Now Joe has become such a favourite," said one, " he ought to look out for a sweetheart."

Here Joe just glanced at Miss Hughes and turned a deeper red than ever.

" Certainly he ought," said another. " Will any of us do, Joe?"

Upon this Joe exhibited fresh symptoms of being uncomfortable, which were hailed with a general burst of laughter.

" I 'll tell you what, ladies," said Mrs. Lewis, " if I 'm not greatly mistaken, Joe has got a sweetheart already."

Another lady said, that to her certain knowledge he had two, and another that he had three, and so on: he standing among them the whole time, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, vexed to death to think that Miss Hughes should hear these libels, and frightened out of his wits lest she should be disposed to believe them.

At length he made his escape, and being induced by the conversation which had just passed, to ponder upon the matter, he was soon led to the conclusion that the fair daughter of Mr. Hughes had made an impression on his heart, and that unless he could marry her he would marry nobody, and must be for ever miserable, with other like deductions which young men are in the habit of making from similar premises. The discovery was not unattended by many misgivings. The great difference of station then existing between them appeared to interpose an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of their marriage; and, further, he had no reason to suppose that the young lady entertained for him any other sentiments than those with which she might be naturally disposed to regard the son of a friend whom she had known so long. These considerations

rendered him as unhappy as the most passionate lover could desire to be; he ate little, drank little, slept less, lost his spirits; and, in short, exhibited a great variety of symptoms sufficiently dangerous in any case, but particularly so in one where the patient had mainly to depend upon the preservation of his powers of fun and comicality, for a distant chance of the fulfilment of his hopes.

CHAPTER III.

1794 to 1797.

Grimaldi falls in Love.—His success—He meets with an accident which brings the Reader acquainted with that invaluable specific "Grimaldi's Embrocation."—He rises gradually in his Profession.—The Pentonville Gang of Burglars.

It is scarcely to be supposed, that such a sudden and complete change in the merry genius of the theatre could escape the observation of those around him, far less of his mother, who, as he had been her constant and affectionate companion, observed him with anxious solicitude. Various hints and soundings, and indirect inquiries, were the consequence, but they were far from eliciting the truth; he was ill, fatigued by constant exertion in difficult parts, and that was all that his friends could gather from him.

There was another circumstance which puzzled the lady mother more than all. This was, that he never visited the dressing-room, whither he had been accustomed regularly to resort; and that he

either took tea before he went to the theatre, or not at all. The truth was, that he was quite unable to endure the facetiousness of the ladies in the presence of Miss Hughes; the more so, because he fancied that his annoyance seemed to afford that young lady considerable amusement, and rather than find this the case, he determined to relinquish the pleasure of her society.

So matters stood for some weeks, when one night, having occasion during the performances to repair to the wardrobe for some articles of dress, he hastily entered, and instead of discovering his old friend Mrs. Lewis, found himself confronted and alone with Mr. Hughes's daughter.

In these cases, if the lady exhibit emotion the gentleman gains courage; but Miss Hughes exhibited no emotion, merely saying,

"Why, Joe, I have not seen you for a fortnight; where *have* you been hiding? How is it that I never see you at tea now?"

The tone of kindness in which this was said, somewhat re-assured the lover, so he made an effort to speak, and got as far as, "I'm not well."

"Not well!" said the young lady. And she

said it so kindly that all poor Joe's emotion returned; and being really ill and weak, and very sensitive withal, he made an effort or two to look cheerful, and burst into tears.

The young lady looked at him for a moment or two quite surprised, and then said, in a tone of earnest commiseration, "I see that you are not well, and that you are very much changed: what is the matter with you? Pray tell me."

At this inquiry the young man, who seems to have inherited all the sensitiveness of his father's character without its worst points, threw himself into a chair, and cried like a child; vainly endeavouring to stammer out a few words, which were wholly unintelligible. Miss Hughes gently endeavoured to soothe him, and at that moment Mrs. Lewis, suddenly entering the room, surprised them in this very sentimental situation; upon which Grimaldi, thinking he must have made himself very ridiculous, jumped up and ran away.

Mrs. Lewis being older in years, and in such matters too, than either Miss Hughes or her devoted admirer, kept her own counsel, thought over what she had seen, and discreetly presented herself before Grimaldi next day, when, after a

sleepless night, he was sauntering moodily about the garden, aggravating all the doubts, and diminishing all the hopes, that involved themselves with the object nearest his heart.

"Dear me, Joe!" exclaimed the old lady, "how wretched you do look! Why, what is the matter?"

He tried an excuse or two, but reposing great trust in the sagacity and sincerity of his questioner, and sadly wanting a confidante, he first solemnly bound her to secrecy and then told his tale. Mrs. Lewis at once took upon herself the office of a go-between; undertook to sound Miss Hughes without delay; and counselled Grimaldi, to prepare a letter containing a full statement of his feelings, which, if the conversation between herself and Miss Hughes on that very evening were propitious, should be delivered on the following.

Accordingly, he devoted all his leisure time that day to the composition of various epistles, and the spoiling of many sheets of paper, with a view to setting down his feelings in the very best and appropriate terms he could possibly employ. One complete letter was finished at last, although even that was not half powerful enough; and going to

the theatre and carefully avoiding the old dressing-room, he went through his part with greater eclát than before. Having hastily changed his dress, he hurried to Mrs. Lewis's room, where that good lady at once detailed all the circumstances that had occurred since the morning, which she thought conclusive, but which the lover feared were not.

It seems that Mrs. Lewis had embraced the first opportunity of being left alone with Miss Hughes to return to the old subject of Joe's looking very ill; to which Miss Hughes replied, that he certainly did, and said it, too, according to the matured opinion of Mrs. Lewis, as if she had been longing to introduce the subject without exactly knowing how.

"What can be the matter with him?" said Miss Hughes.

"I have found it out, Miss," said Mrs. Lewis; "Joe is in love."

"In love!" said Miss Hughes.

"Over head and ears," replied Mrs. Lewis. "I never saw any poor dear young man in such a state."

"Who is the lady?" asked Miss Hughes, in-

specting some object that lay near her with every appearance of unconcern.

"That 's a secret," said Mrs. Lewis. "I know her name; she does not know he is in love with her yet, but I am going to give her a letter to-morrow night, telling her all about it."

"I should like to know her name," said Miss Hughes.

"Why," returned Mrs. Lewis, "you see, I promised Joe not to tell; but as you are so very anxious to know, I can let you into the secret without breaking my word: you shall see the direction of the letter."

Miss Hughes was quite delighted with the idea, and left the room, after making an appointment for the ensuing evening for that purpose.

Such was Mrs. Lewis's tale in brief; after hearing which, Grimaldi, who, not being so well acquainted with the subject, was not so sanguine, went home to bed, but not to sleep: his thoughts wavering between his friend's communication, and the love-letter, of which he could not help thinking that he could still polish up a sentence or two with considerable advantage.

The next morning was one of great agitation,

and when Mrs. Lewis posted off to the theatre with the important epistle in her pocket, the lover fell into such a tremor of anxiety and suspense, that he was quite unconscious how the day passed: he could stay away from the theatre no longer than five o'clock, at which time he hurried down to ascertain the fate of his letter.

"I have not been able to give it yet," said Mrs. Lewis softly; "but do you just go to the dressing-room; she is there: — only look at her, and guess whether she cares for you or not."

He went, and saw Miss Hughes looking very pale, with traces of tears on her face. Six o'clock soon came, and the young lady, hurrying to the room of the confidante, eagerly inquired whether she had got Joe's letter.

"I have," said Mrs. Lewis, looking very sly.

"Oh! pray let me see it," said Miss Hughes; "I am so anxious to know who the lady is, and so desirous that Joe should be happy."

"Why, upon my word," said Mrs. Lewis, "I think I should be doing wrong if I showed it to you, unless Joe said I might."

"Wrong!" echoed the young lady; "Oh! if you only knew how much I have suffered since

last-night!" Here she paused for some moments, and added, with some violence of tone and manner, that if that suspense lasted much longer she should go mad.

"Hey-day! Miss Maria," exclaimed Mrs. Lewis, —"mad! Why, surely you cannot have been so imprudent as to have formed an attachment to Joe yourself! But you shall see the letter, as you wish it; there is only one thing you must promise, and that is, to plead Joe's cause with the lady herself."

Miss Hughes hesitated, faltered, and at length said, she would try.

At this point of the discourse Mrs. Lewis produced the laboured composition, and placed it in her hand.

Miss Hughes raised the letter, glanced at the direction, saw her own name written as plainly as the nervous fingers of its agitated writer would permit, let it fall to the ground, and sunk into the arms of Mrs. Lewis.

While this scene was acting in a private room, Grimaldi was acting upon the public stage; and conscious that his hopes depended upon his exertions, he did not suffer his anxieties, great as they

were, to interfere with his performance. Towards the conclusion of the first piece he heard somebody enter Mr. Hughes's box,—and there sat the object of all his anxiety.

"She has got the letter," thought the trembling actor; "she must have decided by this time."

He would have given all he possessed to have known what had passed,—when the business of the stage calling him to the front, exactly facing the box in which she sat, their eyes met, and she nodded and smiled. This was not the first time that Miss Hughes had nodded and smiled to Joseph Grimaldi, but it threw him into a state of confusion and agitation which at once deprived him of all consciousness of what he was about. He never heard that he did not finish the scene in which he was engaged at the moment, and he always supposed, in consequence, that he did so; but how, or in what manner, he never could imagine, not having the slightest recollection of anything that passed.

It is singular enough, that throughout the whole of Grimaldi's existence, which was a chequered one enough, even at those years when other children are kept in the cradle or the nursery, there

always seemed some odd connexion between his good and bad fortune: no great pleasure appeared to come to him unaccompanied by some accident or mischance: he mentions the fact more than once, and lays great stress upon it.

On this very night, a heavy platform on which ten men were standing broke down, and fell upon him as he stood underneath; a severe contusion of the shoulder was the consequence, and he was carried home immediately. Remedies were applied without loss of time, but he suffered intense pain all night: it gradually abated towards morning, in consequence of the inestimable virtues of a certain embrocation, which he always kept ready in case of such accidents, and which was prepared from a recipe left him by his father, which, having performed a great many cures, he afterwards gave to one Mr. Chamberlaine, a surgeon of Clerkenwell, who christened it, in acknowledgment, "Grimaldi's Embrocation," and used it in his general practice some years with perfect success. Before he was carried from the theatre, however, he had had the presence of mind to beg Mrs. Lewis to be called to him, and to request her to communicate the

nature of the accident to Miss Hughes, (who had quitted her box before it occurred,) as cautiously as she could. This, Mrs. Lewis, who appears to have been admirably qualified for the task in which she was engaged, and to possess quite a diplomatic relish for negotiation, undertook and performed.

There is no need to lengthen this part of his history, which, however interesting, and most honourably so, to the old man himself, who in the last days of his life looked back with undiminished interest and affection to the early time when he first became acquainted with the excellence of a lady to whom he was tenderly attached, and whose affection he never forgot or trifled with, would possess but few attractions for the general reader. The main result is quickly told: he was lying on a sofa next day, with his arm in a sling, when Miss Hughes visited him, and did not affect to disguise her solicitude for his recovery; and, in short, by returning his affection, made him the happiest man, or rather boy, (for he was not yet quite sixteen,) in the world.

There was only one thing that damped his joy, and this was, Miss Hughes's firm and steadfast

refusal to continue any correspondence or communication with him unknown to her parents. Nor is it unnatural that this announcement should have occasioned him some uneasiness, when their relative situations in life are taken into consideration; Mr. Hughes being a man of considerable property, and Grimaldi entirely dependent on his own exertions for support.

He made use of every persuasion in his power to induce the young lady to alter her determination; he failed to effect anything beyond the compromise that for the present she would only mention their attachment to her mother, upon whose kindness and secrecy she was certain she could rely. This was done, and Mrs. Hughes, finding that her daughter's happiness depended on her decision, offered no opposition, merely remarking that their extreme youth forbade all idea of marriage at that time. Three years elapsed before Mr. Hughes was made acquainted with the secret.

After this, his time passed away happily enough; he saw Miss Hughes every evening in his mother's presence, and every Sunday she spent with them. All this time his reputation was rapidly increasing; almost every new part he played rendered

him a greater favourite than before, and altogether his lot in life was a cheerful and contented one.

At this period, the only inhabitants of the house in Penton Place, were Grimaldi and his mother, and Mrs. Lewis, of whom honourable mention has been so often made in the present chapter, together with her husband; there was no servant in the house, a girl that had lived with them some time having gone into the country to see her friends, and no other having been engaged in her absence.

One night, in the middle of August, a "night rehearsal" was called at Sadlers Wells. For the information of those who are unacquainted with theatrical matters, it may be well to state that a "night rehearsal" takes place after the other performances of the evening are over, and the public have left the house. Being an inconvenient and fatiguing ceremony, it is never resorted to, but when some very heavy piece (that is, one on a very extensive scale) is to be produced on a short notice. In this instance a new piece was to be played on the following Monday, of which the performers knew very little, and there

being no time to lose, a "night rehearsal" was called, the natural consequence of which would be the detention of the company at the theatre until four o'clock in the morning at least. Mr. Lewis having notice of the rehearsal in common with the other performers, locked up their dwelling-house, being the last person who left it; brought the street-door key with him, and handed it over to Mr. Grimaldi.

But after the performances were over, which was shortly after eleven o'clock, when the curtain was raised, and the performers, assembling on the stage, prepared to commence the rehearsal, the stage-manager addressed the company in the following unexpected and very agreeable terms:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen, as the new drama will not be produced, as was originally intended, on Monday next, but is deferred until that night week, we shall not be compelled to trouble you with a rehearsal to-night."

This notification occasioned a very quick dispersion of the performers, who, very unexpectedly released from an onerous attendance, hurried home. Grimaldi, having something to do at the theatre which would occupy him about ten minutes,

sent his mother and his friend Mrs. Lewis forward to prepare supper, and followed them shortly afterwards, accompanied by Mr. Lewis and two other performers attached to the theatre.

When the females reached home they found to their great surprise that the garden gate was open.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Grimaldi, "how careless this is of Mr. Lewis!"

It was undoubtedly, for at that time a most notorious gang of thieves infested that suburb of London;—it was a suburb then. Several of the boldest had been hung, and others transported, but these punishments had no effect upon their more lucky companions, who committed their depredations with, if possible, increased hardihood and daring.

They were not a little surprised, after crossing the garden, to find that not only was the garden gate open, but that the street-door was unlocked; and pushing it gently open, they observed the reflection of a light at the end of the passage, upon which of course they both cried "Thieves!" and screamed for help. A man who was employed at Sadlers Wells happened to be passing at the time, and tendered his assistance.

"Do you wait here with Mrs. Lewis a minute," said Grimaldi's mother, "and I will go into the house; don't mind me unless you hear me scream, then come to my assistance." So saying she courageously entered the passage, descended the stairs, entered the kitchen, hastily struck a light, and on lighting a candle and looking round, discovered that the place had been plundered of almost everything it contained.

She was running up stairs to communicate their loss, when Grimaldi and his friends arrived. Hearing what had occurred, they entered the house in a body, and proceeded to search it narrowly, thinking it probable that some of the thieves surprised upon the premises might be still lurking there. In they rushed, the party augmented by the arrival of two watchmen,—chosen, as the majority of that fine body of men invariably were, with a specific view to their old age and infirmities,—and began their inspection: the women screaming and crying, and the men all shouting together.

The house was in a state of great disorder and confusion, but no thieves were to be seen; the cupboards were forced, the drawers had been broken

open, and every article they contained had been removed, with the solitary exception of a small net shawl, which had been worked by Miss Hughes, and given by her to her chosen mother-in-law.

Leaving the others to search the house, and the females to bewail their loss, which was really a very severe one, Grimaldi beckoned a Mr. King, one of the persons who had accompanied him home from the theatre, and suggested in a whisper that they should search the garden together.

King readily complied, and he having armed himself with a heavy stick, and Grimaldi with an old broadsword which he had hastily snatched from its peg on the first alarm, they crept cautiously into the back garden, which was separated from those of the houses on either side by a wall from three to four feet high, and from a very extensive piece of pasture-land beyond it at the bottom, by another wall two or three feet higher.

It was a dark night and they groped about the garden for some time, but found nobody. Grimaldi sprang upon the higher wall, and looking over the lower one, descried a man in the act of

jumping from the wall of the next garden. Upon seeing another figure the robber paused, and taking it for that of his comrade in the darkness of the night, cried softly, "Hush! hush! is that you?"

"Yes!" replied Grimaldi, getting as near him as he could. Seeing that the man, recognising the voice as a strange one, was about to jump down, he dealt him a heavy blow with the broadsword. He yelled out loudly, and stopping for an instant, as if in extreme pain, dropped to the ground, limped off a few paces, and was lost in the darkness.

Grimaldi shouted to his friend to follow him through the back gate, but seeing, from his station on the wall, that he and the thief took directly opposite courses, he leapt into the field, and set off at full speed. He was stopped in the very outset of his career, by tumbling over a cow, which was lying on the ground, in which involuntary pantomimic feat he would most probably have cut his own head off with the weapon he carried, if his theatrical practice as a fencer had not taught him to carry edge tools with caution.

The companion having taken a little run by

himself, soon returned out of breath, to say he had seen nobody, and they re-entered the house, where by the light of the candle it was seen that the sword was covered with blood.

The constable of the night had arrived by this time; and a couple of watchmen bearing large lanterns, to show the thieves they were coming, issued forth into the field, in hopes of taking the offenders alive or dead, — they would have preferred the latter, — and of recovering any of the stolen property, that might be scattered about. The direction which the wounded man had taken having been pointed out, they began to explore, by very slow degrees.

Bustling about, striving to raise the spirits of the party, and beginning to stow away in their proper places such articles as the thieves had condescended to leave, one of the first things Grimaldi chanced to light upon was Miss Hughes's shawl.

"Maria's gift at all events," he said, taking it up and giving it a slight wave in his hand; when out fell a lozenge-box upon the floor, much more heavily than a lozenge-box with any ordinary lozenges inside would do.

Upon this the mother clapped her hands, and set up a louder scream than she had given vent to when she found the house robbed.

"My money! my money!" she screamed.

"It can't be helped, my dear madam," said everybody, "Think of poor Mrs. Lewis, she is quite as badly off."

"Oh, I don't mean that," was the reply. "Oh! thank Heaven they didn't find my money." So with many half frantic exclamations, she picked up the lozenge-box, and there, sure enough, were thirty-seven guineas, (it was completely full,) which had lain securely concealed beneath the shawl!

They sat down to supper, but although Mrs. Grimaldi now cheered up wonderfully, and quite rallied her friend upon her low spirits, poor Mrs. Lewis, who had found no lozenge-box, was quite unable to overcome her loss. Supper over, and some hot potations, which the fright had rendered absolutely necessary, despatched, the friends departed, and the usual inmates of the house were left alone to make such preparations for passing the night as they deemed fitting.

They were ludicrous enough; upon comparing

notes, it was found that nobody could sleep alone, upon which they came to the conclusion, that they had better all sleep in the same room. For this purpose, a mattress was dragged into the front parlour, upon which the two females bestowed themselves without undressing; Lewis sat in an easy-chair; and Grimaldi, having loaded two pistols, wiped the sanguinary stains from the broad-sword, and laid it by his side, drew another easy-chair near the door, and there mounted guard.

All had been quiet for some time, and they were falling asleep, when they were startled by a long loud knocking at the back-door, which led into the garden. They all started up and gazed upon each other, with looks of considerable dismay. The females would have screamed, only they were too frightened; and the men would have laughed it off, but they were quite unable from the same cause to muster the faintest smile.

Grimaldi was the first to recover the sudden shock, which the supposed return of the robbers had communicated to the party, and turning to Lewis, said, with one of his oddest looks,

"You had better go to the back-door, old boy, and see who it is."

Mr. Lewis did not appear quite satisfied upon the point. He reflected for a short time, and, looking with a very blank face at his wife, said he was much obliged to Mr. Grimaldi, but he would rather not.

In this dilemma it was arranged that Lewis should wait in the passage, and that Grimaldi should creep softly up stairs, and reconnoitre the enemy from the window above—a plan which Lewis thought much more feasible, and which was at once put in execution.

While these deliberations were going forward, the knocking had continued without cessation, and it now began to assume a subdued and confidential tone, which, instead of subduing their alarm, rather tended to increase it. Armed with the two pistols and the broadsword, and looking much more like Robinson Crusoe than either the "Shipwrecked Mariner" or the "Little Clown," Grimaldi thrust his head out of the window, and hailed the people below, in a voice which, between agitation and a desire to communicate to the neighbours the full benefit of the discussion, was something akin to that in which his well-known

cry of, "Here we are!" afterwards acquired so much popularity.

It was between two and three o'clock in the morning; the day was breaking, and the light increasing fast. He could descry two men at the door heavily laden with something, but with what he could not discern. All he could see was, that it was not fire-arms, and that was a comfort.

"Hollo! Hollo!" he shouted out of the window, displaying the brace of pistols and the broadsword to the best advantage, "what's the matter there?" Here he coughed very fiercely, and again demanded what was the matter.

"Why, sir," replied one of the men, looking up, and holding on his hat as he did so, "We thought we should never wake ye."

"And what did you want to wake me for?" was the natural inquiry.

"Why, the property!"—replied both the men at the same time.

"The what?" inquired the master of the house, taking in the broadsword, and putting the pistols on the window sill.

"The property!"—replied the two men, pet-

tishly. "Here we have been a-looking over the field all this time, and have found the property."

No further conversation was necessary. The door was opened, the watchmen entered bearing two large sacks, which they had stumbled on in the field, and the females, falling on their knees before them, began dragging forth their contents in an agony of impatience. After a lengthened examination, it was found that the sacks contained every article that had been taken away; that not one, however trifling, was missing, and that they had come into possession, besides, of a complete and extensive assortment of house-breaking tools, including centre-bit, picklock, keys, screws, dark lanterns, a file, and a crow-bar. The watchmen were dismissed with ten shillings, and as many thousand thanks, and the party breakfasted in a much more comfortable manner than that in which they had supped on the previous night.

The conversation naturally turned upon the robbery, and various conjectures and surmises were hazarded relative to the persons by whom it had been committed. It appeared perfectly evident that the thieves, whoever they were, must have obtained information of the expected night

rehearsal at Sadlers Wells; it was equally clear that if the rehearsal had not been most fortunately postponed, they would not only have lost everything they possessed, but the thieves would have got clear off with the booty into the bargain. It was worthy of remark, that the house had never been attempted when the servant girl was at home, and the females were half inclined to attach suspicion to her; but on reflection it seemed unlikely that she was implicated in the transaction, for she was the daughter of very respectable parents, not to mention her uncle having held the situation of master-tailor to the theatre for forty years, and her aunt having served the family in the same capacity as the girl herself. In addition to these considerations, she had been well brought up, had always appeared strictly honest, and had already lived in the house for nearly four years. Upon all these grounds it was resolved that the girl could not be a party to the attempt.

But, whoever committed the burglary, it was necessary that the house should be well secured, with which view a carpenter was sent for, and a great supply of extra bolts and bars were placed

upon the different doors. Notwithstanding these precautions, however, and the additional security which they necessarily afforded, the females were very nervous for a long time, and the falling of a plate, or slamming of a door, or a loud ringing at the bell, or, above all, the twopenny-postman after dark, was sufficient to throw them into the extremity of terror. Being determined not to leave the house, in future, without somebody to take care of it while the family were at the theatre, they resolved, after many *pro's* and *con's*, to engage for the purpose a very trustworthy man, who was employed as a watchman to the theatre, but was not required to attend until eleven o'clock at night, by which time, at all events, some of the family would be able to reach home. The man was hired, and commenced his watch, on the night after the robbery; and there he continued to remain, every evening, until the return of the servant girl from the country released him from further attendance.

The agitation and surprise of this girl were very great, when she was informed of what had occurred, but they did not appear to be the emotions of a guilty person. All agreed that there was no

good ground of suspicion against her. She was asked if she would be afraid to be left alone in the house after what had taken place, when she declared that she was not afraid of any thieves, and that she would willingly sit up alone, as she had been accustomed to do: merely stipulating that she should be allowed to light a fire in Lewis's sitting-room, for the purpose of inducing robbers to suppose that the family were at home, and that she should be provided with a large rattle, with which to alarm the neighbours at any appearance of danger. Both requests were complied with; and as an additional precaution, the street watchman, whose box was within a few yards of the door, was fee'd to be on the alert, to keep a sharp eye upon the house, and to attend to any summons from within, whenever it might be made.

The thieves, whoever they were, were very wanton fellows, and added outrage to plunder, for with the most heartless cruelty, and an absence of all taste for scientific pursuits, which would stigmatise them at once as occupying a very low grade in their profession, had broken open a closet in Grimaldi's room, containing his chosen cabinet of insects, including Dartford Blues, which, either

because it was not portable, or because they thought it of no value, attaching no importance to flies, they most recklessly and barbarously destroyed. With the exception of one small box, they utterly annihilated the whole collection, including even his models, drawings, and colours; it would have taken years to replace them, if the collector had been most indefatigable; and it would have cost at least 200*l.* to have replaced them by purchase. This unforeseen calamity put a total stop to the fly-catching, so collecting together his nets, and cases, and the only box which was not destroyed, he gave them all away next day to an acquaintance who had a taste for such things, and never more employed himself in a similar manner.

After the lapse of a short time, the arrangements and precautions infused renewed confidence into the inmates of the house, and they began to feel more secure than they had yet done since the robbery; a fortnight had now passed over, and they strengthened themselves with the reflection, that the thieves having met with so disagreeable a reception, one of them at least having been severely

wounded, were very unlikely to renew the attempt.

But well founded as these conjectures might seem, they reckoned without their host, for on the third night after the girl's return they made a fresh attack, for which we will reserve a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER IV

1797 to 1798.

The thieves make a second attempt; alarmed by their perseverance Grimaldi repairs to Hatton Garden.—Interview with Mr. Trott; ingenious device of that gentleman and its result on the third visit of the Burglars.—Comparative attractions of Pantomime and Spectacle.—Trip to Gravesend and Chatham.—Disagreeable recognition of a good-humoured friend, and an agreeable mode of journeying recommended to all Travellers.

On the third night,—the previous two having passed in perfect quiet and security,—the servant girl was at work in the kitchen, when she fancied she heard a sound as if some person were attempting to force open the garden-door. She thought it merely the effect of fancy at first, but the noise continuing, she went softly up stairs into the passage, and on looking towards the door, saw that the latch was moved up and down several times by a hand outside, while some person pushed violently against the door itself.

The poor girl being very much frightened, her first impulse was to scream violently, but so far were her cries from deterring the persons outside from persisting in their attempt, that they only seemed to press it with redoubled vigour. Indeed so violent were their exertions, as if irritated by the noise the girl made, that the door was very nearly forced from its position, in which state it was discovered on a subsequent inspection. If it had not been proof against the attacks of the thieves, the girl would assuredly have been murdered. Recovering her presence of mind, however, on finding that they could not force an entrance, she ran to the street-door, flung it open, and had immediate recourse to the rattle, which she wielded with such hearty good will, that the watchmen and half the neighbourhood were quickly on the spot. Immediate search was made for the robbers in the rear of the house, but they had thought it prudent to escape quietly.

Upon the return of the family, all their old apprehensions were revived, and their former fears were increased tenfold by the bold and daring nature of this second attempt. Watch was kept all night, the watchers starting at the

slightest sound ; rest was out of the question, and nothing but dismay and confusion prevailed.

The next morning it was resolved that the house should be fortified with additional strength, and that when these precautions had been taken, Grimaldi should repair to the police-office of the district, state his case to the sitting-magistrate, and claim the assistance of the constituted authorities.

Having had bars of iron, and plates of iron, and patent locks, and a variety of ingenious defences affixed to the interior of the garden-door, which when fastened with all these appurtenances, appeared nearly impregnable, Grimaldi accordingly walked down to Hatton Garden, with the view of backing the locks and bolts with the aid of the executive.

There was at that time a very shrewd knowing officer attached to that establishment whose name was Trott. This Trott was occasionally employed to assist the regular constables at the theatre, when they expected a great house ; and Grimaldi no sooner stepped into the passage, than walking up to him, Trott accosted him with :—

" How do, master ?"

" How do *you* do ?"

" Pretty well, thankee, master : I was just going to call up at your place."

" Ah !" said the other, " you have heard of it, then ?"

" Yes I have heard of it," said Mr. Trott with a grin, " and heard a great deal more about it than you know on, master."

" You don't surely mean to say that you have apprehended the burglars ?"

" No, no, I don't mean that, I wish I did ; they have been one too many for me as yet. Why, when they first started in business there worn't fewer than twenty men in that gang. Sixteen or seventeen on 'em have been hung or transported, and the rest is them that has been at your house. They have got a hiding-place somewhere in Pentonville. I 'll tell you what, master," said Trott, taking the other by the button, and speaking in a hoarse whisper, " they are the worst of the lot ; up to everything they are, and take my word for it, Mr. Grimaldi, they 'll stick at nothing."

Grimaldi looked anything but pleased at this intelligence, and Trott observing his disturbed countenance added,—

"Don't you be alarmed, master; what they want is, their revenge for their former disappointment. That's what it is," said Trott, nodding his head sagaciously.

"It appears very extraordinary," said Grimaldi. "This is a very distressing situation to be placed in."

"Why so it is," said the officer, after a little consideration;—"so it is, when you consider that they never talk without doing. But don't be afraid, Mr. Grimaldi."

"Oh no, I 'm not," replied the other; adding in as cool a manner as he could assume, "they came again last night."

"I know that," said the officer, "I 'll let you into another secret, master. They are coming again to-night."

"Again to-night!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

"As sure as fate," replied the officer, nodding to a friend who was passing down the street on the other side of the way, "and if your establishment an't large enough, and powerful enough to resist 'em—"

"Large and powerful enough!" exclaimed the other. "Why there are only three women and

one other male person besides myself in the house."

"Ah!" said Mr. Trott, "that isn't near enough."

"Enough! no!" rejoined Grimaldi; "and it would kill my mother."

"I dare say it would," acquiesced the officer; "my mother was killed in a similar manner."

This, like the rest of the officer's discourse, was far from consolatory, and Grimaldi looked anxiously in his face for something like a ray of hope.

Mr. Trott meditated for some short time, and then, looking up with his head on one side, said, "I think I see a way now, master."

"What is it? What do you propose? I'm agreeable to anything," said Grimaldi, in a most accommodating manner.

"Never mind that," said the officer. "You put yourself into my hands, and I'll be the saving of your property, and the taking of them."

Grimaldi burst into many expressions of admiration and gratitude, and put his hand into Mr. Trott's hands as an earnest of his readiness to deposit himself there.

"Only rid us," said Grimaldi, "of these dreadful visitors, who really keep us in a state of perpetual misery; and anything you think proper to accept shall be cheerfully paid you."

The officer replied with many moral observations on the duties of police-officers, their incorruptible honesty, their zeal, and rigid discharge of the functions reposed in them. If Mr. Grimaldi would do his duty to his country, and prosecute them to conviction, that was all he required.

To this, Grimaldi, not having any precise idea of the expense of a prosecution, readily assented, and the officer declared he should be sufficiently repaid by the pleasing consciousness of having done his duty. He did not consider it necessary to add, that a reward had been offered for the apprehension of the same offenders, payable on their conviction.

They walked back to the house together, and the officer having inspected it with the practised eye of an experienced person, declared himself thoroughly satisfied, and stated that if his injunctions were strictly attended to, he had no doubt his final operations would be completely successful.

"It will be necessary," said Trott, speaking with great pomp and grandeur, as the inmates assembled round him to hear his oration,—"it will be necessary to take every portable article out of the back kitchen, the parlour, and the bedroom, and to give me up the entire possession of this house for one night; at least until such time as I shall have laid my hand upon these here gentlemen."

It is needless to say that this proposition was agreed to, and that the females at once went about clearing the rooms as the officer had directed. At five o'clock in the afternoon he returned, and the keys of the house were delivered up to him. These arrangements having been made, the family departed to the theatre as usual, leaving Mr. Trott alone in the house; for the servant girl had been sent away to a neighbour's by his desire, whether from any feeling of delicacy on the part of Mr. Trott, (who was a married man,) or from any apprehension that she might impede his operations, we are not informed.

The officer remained alone in the house, taking care not to go near any of the windows until it was dark, when two of his colleagues, coming by

appointment to the garden-door, were stealthily admitted into the house. Having carefully scrutinised the whole place, they disposed themselves in the following order. One man locked and bolted in the front kitchen, another locked and bolted himself in the sitting-room above stairs, and Mr. Trott, the presiding genius, in the front-parlour towards the street; the last-named gentleman having, before he retired into ambuscade, bolted and barred the back-door, and only locked the front one.

Here they remained for some time, — solitary enough, no doubt, for there was not a light in the house, and each man being fastened in a room by himself, was as much alone as if there had been no one else in the place. The time seemed unusually long; they listened intently; they were occasionally deceived for an instant by some noise in the street, but it soon subsided again, and all was silent as before.

At length, some time after night-fall, a low knock came to the street-door. No attention being paid to it, the knock was repeated, and this time it was rather louder. It echoed through the house, but no one stirred. After a short interval, as if the person outside had been listening and

had satisfied himself, a slight rattling was heard at the keyhole, and, the lock being picked, the footsteps of two men were heard in the passage.

They quietly bolted the door after them, and pulling from beneath their coats a couple of dark lanterns, walked softly up stairs. Finding the door of the front-room locked they came down again, and tried the front-parlour, which was also locked, whereat Mr. Trott, who was listening with his ear close to the handle, laughed immoderately, but without noise.

Unsuccessful in these two attempts, they went down stairs, and with some surprise found one of the kitchens locked, and the other open. Only stopping just to peep into the open one, they once more ascended to the passage.

"Well," said one of the men, as he came up the kitchen stairs, "we have got it all to ourselves to-night, anyway, so we had better not lose any time. Hollo!"—

"What's the matter?" said the other, looking back.

"Look here!" rejoined his comrade, pointing to the garden-door, with the bolts, and iron plates, and patent locks,—"Here's protection—here's

security for a friend. These have been put on since we were here afore; we might have tried to get in for everlasting."

"We had better stick it open," said the other man, "and then if there's any game in front, we can get off as we did t'other night."

"Easily said. — How do you do it?" said the first speaker; "it will take no end of time, and make no end of noise, to undo all these things. We had better look sharp. There's no rehearsal to night, remember."

At this, they both laughed, and determining to take the front-parlour first, picked the lock without more ado. This done, they pushed against the door to open it, but were unable to do so by reason of the bolts inside, which Mr. Trott had taken good care to thrust into the staples as far as they would possibly go.

"This is a rum game!" said one of the fellows, giving the door a kick; "it won't open!"

"Never mind, let it be," said the other man; "there's a spring or something. The back-kitchen's open, we had better begin there; we know there's some property there, because we took it away before. Show yourself smart, and bring the bag."

As the speaker stooped to trim his lantern, the other man joined him, and said with an oath and a chuckle,—

"Shouldn't you like to know who it was as struck you with the sword, Tom?"

"I wish I did," growled the other, "I'd put a knife in him before many days was over. Come on."

They went down stairs, and Trott, softly gliding from his hiding-place, double-locked the street-door, and put the key in his pocket. He then stationed himself at the top of the kitchen stairs, where he listened with great glee to the exclamations of surprise and astonishment which escaped the robbers, as they opened drawer after drawer, and found them all empty.

"Everything taken away!"—said one of the men: "what the devil does this mean?"

The officer by way of reply, fired a pistol charged only with blank powder, down the stairs, and retreated expeditiously to his parlour.

This being the signal, the sound was instantly followed by the noise of the other two officers unlocking and unbolting the doors of their hiding-places. The thieves, scrambling up stairs, rushed

quickly to the street-door, but, in consequence of its being locked, they were unable to escape; were easily made prisoners, handcuffed, and borne away in triumph.

The affair was all over, and the house restored to order, when the family came home. The officer who had been despatched to bring the servant home, and left behind to bear her company in case any of the companions of the thieves should pay the house a visit, took his departure as soon as they appeared, bearing with him a large sack left behind by the robbers, which contained as extensive an assortment of the implements of their trade, as had been so fortunately captured on their first appearance.

Grimaldi appeared at Hatton Garden the next morning, and was introduced to the prisoners for the first time. His testimony having been taken, and the evidence of Mr. Trott and his men received, by which the identity of the criminals was clearly proved, they were fully committed for trial, and Grimaldi was bound over to prosecute. They were tried at the ensuing Sessions; the jury at once found them guilty, and they were transported for life.

This anecdote, which is narrated in every particular precisely as the circumstances occurred, affords a striking and curious picture of the state of society in and about London, in this respect, at the very close of the last century. The bold and daring highwaymen who took the air at Hounslow, Bagshot, Finchley, and a hundred other places of quite fashionable resort, had ceased to canter their bloodhorses over heath and road in search of plunder, but there still existed in the capital and its environs, common and poorer gangs of thieves, whose depredations were conducted with a daring, and disregard of consequences, which to the citizens of this age is wholly extraordinary. One attempt at robbery similar to that which has just been described, committed now-a-days in such a spot, would fill the public papers for a month; but three such attempts on the same house, and by the same men, would set all London, and all the country for thirty miles round to boot, in a ferment of wonder and indignation.

It was proved on the examination of these men at the Police-office, that they were the only remaining members of a band of thieves called the "Pentonville Robbers," and the prosecu-

tor and his family congratulated themselves not a little upon the fact, inasmuch as it relieved them from the apprehension that there were any more of their companions left behind who might feel disposed to revenge their fate.

This was Grimaldi's first visit to a Police-office. His next appearance on the same scene was under very different circumstances. But of this anon.

The fears of the family had been so thoroughly roused, and their dreams were haunted by such constant visions of the Pentonville Robbers, that the house grew irksome and distressing, especially to the females. Moreover, Grimaldi now began to think it high time that his marriage should take place; and as now that he had gained the mother's approval, he did not so entirely despair of succeeding with the father, he resolved to take a larger house, and to furnish and fit it up handsomely, on a scale proportionate to his increased means. He naturally trusted that Mr. Hughes would be more disposed to entrust his daughter's happiness to his charge when he found that her suitor was enabled to provide her with a comfortable, if not an elegant home, and to support her in a sphere of life

not very distantly removed from that in which her father's fortune and possessions entitled her to be placed.

Accordingly, he gave notice to the landlord of the ill-fated house in Penton Place, that he should quit it in the following March; and accompanied by Miss Hughes, to whom, as he very properly says, "*of course*" he referred every thing, wandered about the whole neighbourhood in search of some house that would be more suitable to them. Penton Street was the St. James's of Pentonville, the Regent's Park of the City Road, in those days; and here he was fortunate enough to secure the house No. 37, which was forthwith furnished and fitted up, agreeably to the taste and directions of Miss Hughes herself.

He had plenty of time to devote to the contemplation of his expected happiness, and the complete preparation of his new residence, for Sadlers Wells theatre was then closed,—the season terminating at that time at the end of October,—and as he was never wanted at Drury Lane until Christmas, and not much then, unless they produced a pantomime, his theatrical avocations were

not of a very heavy or burdensome description.

This year, too, the proprietors of Drury Lane, in pursuance of a custom to which they had adhered for some years, produced an expensive pageant instead of a pantomime; an alteration in Grimaldi's opinion very little for the better, if not positively for the worse. It having been the established custom for many years to produce a pantomime at Christmas, the public naturally looked for it; and although such pieces as Blue Beard, Feudal Times, Lodoiska, and others of the same class, undoubtedly drew money to the house, still it is questionable whether they were so profitable to the treasury as the pantomimes at Covent Garden. If we may judge from the result, they certainly were not, for after several years' trial, during the whole of which time pantomimes were annually produced at Govent Garden, the Christmas Pantomime was again brought forward at Drury Lane, to the exclusion of spectacle.

He played in all these pieces, Blue Beard and so forth; yet his parts being of a trifling descrip-

tion, occupied no time in the getting up, and as he infinitely preferred the company of Miss Hughes to that of a theatrical audience, he was well pleased. By the end of February, the white-washers, carpenters, upholsterers, even the painters, had left the Penton-street mansion, and there being no pantomime, it seemed a very eligible period for being married at once.

Grimaldi told Miss Hughes that he thought so; Miss Hughes replied that he had only to gain her father's consent in the first instance, and then the day should be fixed without more ado.

This was precisely what the lover was most anxious to avoid, for two reasons: firstly, because it involved the very probable postponement of his happiness; and secondly, because the obtaining this consent was an awkward process. At last he recollected that in consequence of Mr. Hughes being out of town, it was quite impossible to ask him.

"Very good," said Miss Hughes; "everything happens for the best. I am sure you would never venture to speak to him on the subject, so you had far better write. He will not keep you long in suspense, I know, for he is quite certain to answer your letter by return of post."

Mr. Hughes was then at Exeter; and as it certainly did appear to his destined son-in-law a much better course to write than to speak, even if he had been in London, he sat down without delay, and, after various trials, produced such a letter as he thought would be most likely to find its way to the father's heart. Miss Hughes approving of the contents, it was re-read, copied, punctuated, folded, and posted.

Next day the lady was obliged to leave town, to spend a short time with some friends at Gravesend; and the lover, very much to his annoyance and regret, was fain to stay behind, and console himself as he best could in his mistress's absence, and the absence of a reply from her father: to which he naturally looked forward with considerable impatience and anxiety.

Five days passed away and still no letter came; and poor Grimaldi, being left to his own fears and apprehensions, was reduced to the most desperate and dismal forebodings. Having no employment at the theatre, and nothing to do but to think of his mistress and his letter, he was almost beside himself with anxiety and suspense. It was with

no small pleasure, then, that he received a note from Miss Hughes, entreating him to take a trip down to Gravesend in one of the sailing-boats on the following Sunday, as he could return by the same conveyance on the same night. Of course he was not slow to avail himself of the invitation; so he took shipping at the Tower on the morning of the day appointed, and reached the place of his destination in pretty good time. The only water communication was by sailing-boats; and as at that time people were not independent of wind and tide, and everything but steam, the passengers were quite satisfied to get down when they did.

He found Miss Hughes waiting for him at the landing-place, and getting into a "tide" coach, they proceeded to Chatham; Miss Hughes informing him that she had made a confidant of her brother, who was stationed there, and that they purposed spending the day together.

"And now, Joe," said Miss Hughes, when he had expressed the pleasure which this arrangement afforded him, "tell me everything that has happened. What does my father say?"

"My dear," replied Grimaldi, "he says nothing at all; he has not answered my letter."

"Not answered your letter!" said the lady: "his punctuality is proverbial."

"So I have always heard," replied Grimaldi: "but so it is; I have not heard a syllable."

"Then you must write again, Joe," said Miss Hughes, "immediately, without the least delay. Let me see,—you cannot very well write to-day, but to-morrow you must not fail: I cannot account for his silence."

"Nor I," said Grimaldi.

"Unless, indeed," said Miss Hughes, "some extraordinary business has driven your letter from his memory."

As people always endeavour to believe what they hope, they were not long in determining that it must be so. Dismissing the subject from their minds, they spent the day happily, in company with young Mr. Hughes, and returning to Gravesend in the evening by another tide coach, Grimaldi was on board the sailing-boat shortly before eleven o'clock; it being arranged that Miss Hughes was to follow on the next Saturday.

In the cabin of the boat, he found Mr. De Cleave, at that time treasurer of Sadlers Wells. There are jealousies in theatres, as there are in courts, ball-rooms, and boarding-schools; and this Mr. De Cleave was jealous of Grimaldi—not because he stood in *his* way, for he had no touch of comedy in his composition, but because he had eclipsed, and indeed altogether outshone, one Mr. Hartland, "a very clever and worthy man," says Grimaldi, who was at that time also engaged as a pantomimic and melo-dramatic actor at Sadlers Wells. Mr. De Cleave, thinking for his friends as well as himself, hated Grimaldi most cordially, and the meeting was consequently by no means an agreeable one to him; for if he had chanced to set eyes upon Miss Hughes, great mischief-making and turmoil would be the inevitable consequence.

"In the name of wonder, Grimaldi," said this agreeable character, "what are you doing here?"

"Going back to London," replied Grimaldi, "as I suppose most of us are."

"That is not what I meant," said De Cleave: "what I meant was, to ask you what business might have taken you to Gravesend."

"Oh! no business at all," replied the other:

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" directly I landed, I went off by the tide-coach to Chatham."

" Indeed !" said the other.

" Yes," said Grimaldi.

The treasurer looked rather puzzled at this, sufficiently showing by his manner that he had been hunting about Gravesend all day in search of the young man. He remained silent a short time, and then said, " I only asked because I thought you might have had a dinner engagement at Gravesend perhaps,—with a young lady even. Who knows?"

This little sarcasm on the part of the worthy treasurer convinced Grimaldi, that having somewhere picked up the information that Miss Hughes was at Gravesend, and having heard afterwards from Mrs. Lewis, or somebody at the theatre, that Grimaldi was going to the same place, he had followed him thither with the amiable intention of playing the spy, and watching his proceedings. If he had observed the young people together, his mischievous intentions would have been completely successful; but the tide-coach had balked him, and Mr. De Cleave's good-natured arrangements were futile.

Grimaldi laughed in his sleeve as the real state of the case presented itself to his mind; and feeling well pleased that he had not seen them together, in the absence of any reply from Mr. De Cleave, he ascended to the deck, and left the treasurer to his meditations.

Upon the deck, on a green bench with a back to it, and arms besides, there sat a neighbour, and a neighbour's wife, and the neighbour's wife's sister, and a very pretty girl, who was the neighbour's wife's sister's friend. There was just room for one more on the bench, and they insisted upon Mr. Grimaldi occupying the vacant seat, which he readily did, for they were remaining on deck to avoid the closeness of the cabin, and he preferred the cold air of the night to the cold heart of Mr. De Cleave.

So down he sat next to the pretty friend; and the pretty friend being wrapped in a very large seaman's coat, it was suggested by the neighbour, who was a wag in his way, that she ought to lend a bit of it to Mr. Grimaldi, who looked very cold. After a great deal of blushing and giggling, the young lady put her left arm through the left arm of the coat, and Grimaldi put his right arm

through the right arm of the coat, to the great admiration of the whole party, and after the manner in which they show the giant's coats at the fairs. They sat in this way during the whole voyage; and Grimaldi always declared that it was a very comfortable way of travelling, as no doubt it is.

"Laugh away!" he said as the party gave vent to their delight in bursts of merriment. "If we had only something here to warm us internally as well as the great-coat does externally, we would laugh all night."

"What should you recommend for that purpose?" asked the neighbour.

"Brandy," said the friend.

"Then," rejoined the neighbour, "if you were a harlequin, instead of a clown, you could not have conjured it up quicker." And with these words, the neighbour, who was a plump, red-faced, merry fellow, held up with both hands a large heavy stone bottle, with an inverted drinking-horn resting on the bung; and having laughed very much at his own forethought, he set the stone bottle down, and sat himself on the top of it.

It was the only thing wanting to complete the mirth of the party, and very merry they were. It

was a fine moonlight night, cold, but healthy and fresh, and it passed pleasantly and quickly away. The day had broken before they reached Billingsgate-stairs; the stone-bottle was empty, the neighbour asleep, Grimaldi and the young lady buttoned up in the great-coat, and the wife and daughter very jocose and good-humoured.

Here they parted: the neighbour's family went home in a hackney-coach, and Grimaldi bidding them good-bye, walked away to Gracechurch-street, not forgetting to thank the young lady for her humanity and compassion.

He had occasion to call at a coach-office in Gracechurch-street; but finding that it was not yet open, (for it was very early,) and not feeling at all fatigued by his journey, he determined to walk about the city for a couple of hours or so, and then to return to the coach-office. By so doing, he would pass away the time till the office opened, gain an opportunity of looking about him in that part of London to which he was quite a stranger, and avoid disturbing the family at home until a more seasonable hour. So he made up his mind to walk the two hours away, and turned back for that purpose.

CHAPTER V.

1798.

An extraordinary circumstance concerning himself, with another extraordinary circumstance concerning his Grandfather. —Specimen of a laconic epistle, and an account of two interviews with Mr. Hughes, in the latter of which a benevolent gentleman is duly rewarded for his trouble.—Preparations for his marriage.—Fatiguing effects of his exertions at the Theatre.

It was now broad day. The sun had risen and was shedding a fine mild light over the quiet streets. The crowd so soon to be let loose upon them was not yet stirring, and the only people visible were the passengers who had landed from the boats, or who had just entered London by other early conveyances. Although he had lived in London all his life, he knew far less about it than many country people who have visited it once or twice; and so unacquainted was he with the particular quarter of the city in which he found himself, that he had never even seen the

Tower of London. He walked down to look at that; and then he stared at the buildings round about, and the churches, and a thousand objects which no one but a loiterer ever bestows a glance upon; and so was walking on pleasantly enough, when all at once he struck his foot against something which was lying on the pavement.

Looking down to see what it was, he perceived, to his great surprise, a richly ornamented net purse of a very large size filled with gold coin.

He was perfectly paralysed by the sight. He looked at it again and again without daring to touch it. Then, by a sudden impulse, he glanced cautiously round, and seeing that he was wholly unobserved, and that there was not a solitary being within sight, he picked up the purse and thrust it into his pocket.

As he stooped for this purpose, he observed, lying on the ground on very nearly the same spot, a small bundle of papers tied round with a piece of string. He picked them up too, mechanically. What was his astonishment, on examining this last discovery more narrowly, to find that the bundle was composed exclusively of Bank-notes!

There was still nobody to be seen; there were

no passers-by, no sound of footsteps in the adjacent streets. He lingered about the spot for more than an hour, eagerly scrutinising the faces of the people, who now began passing to and fro, with looks which themselves almost seemed to inquire whether they had lost anything. No! there was no inquiry, no searching; no person ran distractedly past him, or groped among the mud by the pavement's side. It was evidently of no use waiting there; and, quite tired of doing so, he turned and walked slowly back to the coach-office in Gracechurch-street. He met or overtook no person on the road who appeared to have lost anything, far less the immense sum of money (for such it appeared to him) that he had found.

All this time, and for hours afterwards, he was in a state of turmoil and agitation almost inconceivable. He felt as if he had committed some dreadful theft, and feared discovery, and the shameful punishment which must follow it. His legs trembled beneath him so that he could scarcely walk, his heart beat violently, and the perspiration started on his face.

The more he reflected upon the precise nature of his situation, the more distressed and appre-

hensive he became. Suppose the money were to be found upon him by the loser, who would believe him when he declared that he picked it up in the street? Would it not appear much more probable that he had stolen it? and if such a charge were brought against him, by what evidence could he rebut it? As these thoughts, and twenty such, passed through his mind, he was more than once tempted to draw the money from his pocket, fling it on the pavement, and take to his heels; which he was only restrained from doing by reflecting that if he were observed and questioned, his answers might at once lead him to be accused of a charge of robbery, in which case he would be as badly off as if he were in the grasp of the real loser. It would appear at first sight a very lucky thing to find such a purse; but Grimaldi thought himself far from fortunate as these torturing thoughts filled his mind.

When he got to Gracechurch-street, he found the coach-office still closely shut, and, turning towards home through Coleman-street and Finsbury-square, he passed into the City-road, which then, with the exception of a few houses in the immediate neighbourhood of the Angel at Is-

lington, was entirely lined, on both sides, with the grounds of market-gardeners. This was a favourable place in which to count the treasure; so, sitting down upon a bank in a retired spot, just where the Eagle Tavern now stands, he examined his prize. The gold in the purse was all in guineas. The whole contents of the bundle were Bank-notes, varying in their amounts from five to fifty pounds each. And this was all there was: there was no memorandum, no card, no scrap of paper, no document of any kind whatever, affording the slightest clue to the name or residence of the owner. Besides the money, there was nothing but the piece of string which kept the notes together, and the handsome silk net purse before mentioned which held the gold.

He could not count the money then, for his fingers trembled so that he could scarcely separate the notes, and he was so confused and bewildered that he could not reckon the gold. He counted it shortly after he reached home though, and found that there were 380 guineas, and 200*l.* in notes, making in the whole the sum of 599*l.*

He reached home between seven and eight o'clock, where, going instantly to bed, he remained

sound asleep for several hours. There was no news respecting the money, which he longed to appropriate to his own use; so he put it carefully by, determining of course to abstain rigidly from doing so, and to use all possible means to discover the owner.

He did not forget the advice of Miss Hughes in the hurry and excitement consequent upon his morning's adventure, but wrote another epistle to the father, recapitulating the substance of his former letter, and begging to be favoured with a reply.

Having despatched this to the post-office, he devoted the remainder of the day to a serious consideration of the line of action it would be most proper to adopt with regard to the five hundred and ninety-nine pounds so suddenly acquired. Eventually he resolved to consult an old and esteemed friend of his father's, upon whose judgment he knew he might depend, and whose best advice he felt satisfied he could command.

This determination he carried into execution that same evening, and after a long conversation with the gentleman in question, during which he met all the young man's natural and probably

apparent inclination to apply the money to his own occasions and views with arguments and remarks which were wholly unanswerable. He submitted to be guided by him, and acted accordingly.

For a whole week the two friends carefully examined every paper which was published in London, if not in the hope, at least in the expectation of seeing the loss advertised; but, strange as it may seem, nothing of the kind appeared. At the end of the period named, an advertisement, of which the following is a copy, (their joint production,) appeared in the daily papers:—

"Found by a gentleman, in the streets of London, some money, which will be restored to the owner upon his giving a satisfactory account of the manner of its loss, its amount, the numbers of the notes," &c. &c.

To this was appended a full and particular address: but, notwithstanding all these precautions, notwithstanding the publicity that was given to the advertisement, and notwithstanding that the announcement was frequently repeated,—from that hour to the very last moment of his life Grimaldi never heard one word or syllable regard-

ing the treasure he had so singularly acquired; nor was he ever troubled with any one application relative to the notice.

A somewhat similar circumstance occurred to his maternal grandfather. He was in the habit of attending Leadenhall Market early every Thursday morning, and as he frequently made large purchases, his purse was generally well lined. Upon one occasion, he took with him nearly four hundred pounds, principally in gold and silver, which formed a tolerably large bagful, the weight of which rather impeded his progress. When he arrived near the Royal Exchange, he found that his shoe had become unbuckled, and taking from his pocket the bag, which would otherwise have prevented his stooping, (for he was a corpulent man,) he placed it upon a neighbouring post, and then proceeded to adjust his buckle. This done, he went quietly on to market, thinking nothing of the purse and its contents until some time afterwards, when, having to pay for a heavy purchase, he missed it, and after some consideration recollected the place where he had left. He hurried to the spot. Although more than three quarters of an hour had elapsed since he had left it in the

prominent situation already described, there it remained safe and untouched on the top of a post in the open street!

Four anxious days (he had both money and a wife at stake) passed heavily away; but on the fifth, Saturday — a reply arrived from Mr. Hughes, which being probably one of the shortest epistles ever received through the hands of the general postman, is subjoined verbatim.

"DEAR JOE,—

"Expect to see me in a few days.

"Yours truly, R. HUGHES."

If there was nothing decidedly favourable to be drawn from this brief *morceau*, there was at least nothing very appalling to his hopes: it was evident that Mr. Hughes was not greatly offended at his presumption, and probable that he might be eventually induced to give his consent to Grimaldi's marriage with his daughter. This conclusion, to which he speedily came, tended greatly to elevate his spirits; nor did they meet with any check from the sudden appearance of Miss Hughes from Gravesend.

The meeting was a joyful one on both sides. As soon as their mutual greetings were over, he showed her her father's letter, of which she appeared to take but little notice.

"Why, Maria!" he exclaimed with some surprise, "you scarcely look upon this letter, and seem to care little or nothing about it!"

"To tell you the truth, Joe," answered Miss Hughes, smiling, "my father has already arrived in town: I found him at home when I got there two or three hours back, and he desired me to tell you that he wishes to see you on Monday morning if you will call at the theatre."

Upon hearing this, all the old nervous symptoms returned, and he felt as though he were about to receive a final death blow to his hopes.

"You may venture to take courage, I think," said Miss Hughes: "I have very little fear or doubt upon the subject."

Her admirer had a good deal of both; but he was somewhat reassured by the young lady's manner, and her conviction that her father, who had always treated her most kindly and indulgently, would not desert her then. Comforted by discussing the probabilities of success, and all the happiness that was to follow it, they spent the

remainder of the day happily enough, and looked forward as calmly as they could to the Monday which was to decide their fate.

The following day — Sunday — was rather a wearisome one, being occupied with speculations as to what the morrow would bring forth. However, long as it seemed, the night arrived at last; and though that was long too, Monday morning succeeded it as usual.

Concealing his inward agitation as he best might, he walked to the theatre, and there in the treasury found Mr. Hughes. He was received, very kindly, but, after some trivial conversation, was much astonished by Mr. Hughes saying, "So you are going to leave Sadlers Wells, and all your old friends, merely because you can get a trifle more elsewhere,—eh Joe?"

He was so amazed at this, he could scarcely speak, but quickly recovering, said, "I can assure you, sir, that no such idea ever entered my head: —in fact, even if I wished such a thing, which, Heaven knows, is furthest from my thoughts! I could not do so, being under articles to you."

"You forget," replied Mr. Hughes somewhat sternly, "your articles have expired here."

And so they had, and so he had forgotten, and so he was constrained to confess.

"It is rather odd," continued Mr. Hughes, "that so important a circumstance should have escaped your memory: but tell me, do you know Mr. Cross?"

Mr. Cross was manager of the Circus, now the Surrey Theatre, and had repeatedly made Grimaldi offers to leave Sadlers Wells and join his company. He had done so, indeed, only a few days prior to this conversation, offering to allow him to name his own terms. But these and other similar invitations he had firmly declined, being unwilling for many reasons to leave the theatre to which he had been accustomed all his life.

From this observation of Mr. Hughes, and the manner in which it was made, it was obvious to him that some one had endeavoured to injure him in that gentleman's opinion; and fortunately chancing to have in his pocket-book the letters he had received from Mr. Cross, and copies of his own replies, he lost no time in clearing himself of the charge.

"My dear sir," he said, "I do not know Mr. Cross personally, but very well as a corre-

spondent, inasmuch as he has repeatedly written, offering engagements to me, all of which I have declined;" and he placed the papers before him.

The perusal of these letters seemed to satisfy Mr. Hughes, who returned them, and said smilingly, "Well, then, we'll talk about a fresh engagement here, as you prefer old quarters. Let me see: your salary is now four pounds per week:—well, I will engage you for three seasons, and the terms shall be these: for the first season, six pounds per week; for the second, seven; and for the third, eight. Will that do?"

He readily agreed to a proposition which, handsome in itself, greatly exceeded anything he had anticipated. As Mr. Hughes seemed anxious to have the affair settled, and Grimaldi was perfectly content that it should be, two witnesses were sent for, and the articles were drawn up and signed upon the spot.

Then again they were left alone, and after a few moments more of desultory conversation, Mr. Hughes rose, saying, "I shall see you, I suppose, in the evening, as I am going to Drury Lane to see Blue Beard." He advanced towards the door

as he spoke, and then suddenly turning round, added, "Have you anything else to say to me?"

Now was the time or never. Screwing his courage to the sticking-place, Grimaldi proceeded to place before Mr. Hughes his hopes and prospects, strongly urging that his own happiness and that of his daughter depended upon his consent being given to their marriage.

Mr. Hughes had thought over the subject well, and displayed by no means that displeasure which the young man's anxious fears had prophesied; he urged the youth of both parties as an argument against acceding to their wishes, but finally gave his consent, and by so doing transported the lover with joy.

Mr. Hughes advanced to the door of the room, and throwing it open, as he went out, said to his daughter, who chanced to be sitting in the next room, "Maria, Joe is here: you had better come and welcome him."

Miss Hughes came like a dutiful daughter, and *did* welcome her faithful admirer, as he well deserved for his true-hearted and constant affection. In the happiness of the moment, the fact that the

door of the room was standing wide open quite escaped the notice of both, who never once recollected the possibility of any third person being an unseen witness to the interview.

This was a red-letter day in Grimaldi's calendar: he had nothing to do in the evening at Drury Lane until the last scene but one of Blue Beard, so went shopping with his future wife, buying divers articles of plate, and such other small wares as young housekeepers require.

On hurrying to the theatre at night, he found Mr. Hughes anxiously regarding the machinery of the last scene in Blue Beard, which he was about getting up at the Exeter Theatre.

"This machinery is very intricate, Joe," said the father-in-law upon seeing him.

"You are right, sir," replied Joe; "and, what is more, it works very badly."

"So I should expect," was the reply; "and as I am afraid we shall not manage this very well in the country, I wish I could improve it."

Among the numerous modes of employing any spare time to which Grimaldi resorted for the improvement of a vacant hour, the invention of model transformations and pantomime tricks held

a foremost place at that time, and did, though in a limited degree, to the close of his life.

At the time of his death he had many excellent models of this description, besides several which he sold to Mr. Bunn so recently as a few months prior to December 1836, all of which were used in the pantomime of "Harlequin and Gammer Gurton," produced at Drury Lane on the 26th of that month. He rarely allowed any machinery which came under his notice, especially if a little peculiar, to pass without modelling it upon a small scale. He had a complete model of the skeleton "business" in Blue Beard; and not merely that, but an improvement of his own besides, by which the intricate nature of the change might be avoided, and many useless flaps were dispensed with.

Nervously anxious to elevate himself as much as possible in the opinion of Mr. Hughes at this particular juncture, he eagerly explained to him the nature of his alterations as far as the models were concerned, and plainly perceived he was agreeably surprised at the communication. He begged his acceptance of models both of the original mechanism and of his own improved version

of it; and Mr. Hughes, in reply, invited him to breakfast on the following morning, and requested him to bring both models with him. This he failed not to do. It happened that a rather ludicrous scene awaited him.

He had one or two enemies connected at that time with Sadlers Well, who allowed their professional envy to impel them to divers acts of small malignity. One of these persons, having been told of his saluting Miss Hughes by a servant girl with whom he chanced to be acquainted, and who had witnessed the action, sought and obtained an interview that evening with the father upon his return from Drury Lane, and stated the circumstance to him, enlarging and embellishing the details with divers comments upon the ingratitude of Grimaldi in seducing the affections of a young lady so much above him, and making various wise and touching reflections most in vogue on such occasions.

Mr. Hughes heard all this, with a calmness which first of all astonished the speaker, but which he eventually attributed to concentrated rage. After he had finished his speech, the former quietly said, "Will you favour me by

coming here at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, sir?"

"Most certainly," was the reply.

"Allow me, however, at once," continued Mr. Hughes, "to express my thanks for your kindness in informing me of that which so nearly concerns my domestic happiness. Will you take a glass of madeira?"

"I thank you, sir," answered the other.

The wine was brought and drunk, and the friend departed, congratulating himself, as he walked away, upon having "settled Joe's business;" which indeed he had, but not after the fashion he expected or intended.

As to Grimaldi, he was up with the lark arranging the machinery and making it look and work to the best advantage; in which having succeeded to his heart's content, he put the models he had promised Mr. Hughes into his pocket, and walked down to his house to breakfast agreeably to the arrangement of the night before.

Upon his arrival, he was told that breakfast was not quite ready, and likewise that Mr. Hughes wished to see him immediately in the treasury, where he was then awaiting his arrival.

There was something in the manner of the servant-girl, (the same, by the bye, who had told of the kissing,) as she said this, which induced him involuntarily to fear some ill, and, without knowing exactly why, he began to apprehend those thousand and one impossible, or at least improbable evils, the dread of which torment the man nervously afraid of losing some treasure upon the possession of which his happiness depends.

"Is Mr. Hughes alone?" he asked.

"No, sir," answered the girl; "there is a gentleman with him;"—and then she mentioned a name which increased his apprehensions. However, plucking up all his courage, he advanced to the appointed chamber, and in two minutes found himself in the presence of Mr. Hughes and his accuser.

The former received him coldly; the latter turned away when he saw him without vouchsafing a word.

"Come in, sir," said Mr. Hughes, "and close the door after you." He did as he was told; never, either before or afterwards, feeling so strangely like a criminal.

"Mr. Grimaldi," continued Mr. Hughes with a

mingled formality and solemnity which appalled him, "I have something very important to communicate to you, — in fact, I have had a charge preferred against you of a most serious description, sir."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes, indeed, sir!" said the enemy with a look very like one of triumph.

"It is true," replied Mr. Hughes, "and I fear you will not be able to clear yourself from it: however, in justice to you, the charge shall be fully stated in your own presence. Repeat, sir, if you please," he continued, addressing the accuser, "what you told me last night."

And repeat it he did, in a speech replete with malignity, and not destitute of oratorical merit; in which he dwelt upon the serpent-like duplicity with which young Grimaldi had stolen into the bosom of a happy and hospitable family for the purpose of robbing a father and mother of their beloved daughter, and dragging down from her own respectable sphere a young and inexperienced girl to visit her with all the sorrows consequent upon limited means and the needy home of a struggling actor.

It was with inexpressible astonishment that he heard all this; but still greater was his astonishment at witnessing the demeanour of Mr. Hughes, who heard this lengthened oration with a settled frown of attention, as though what he heard, alike excited his profound consideration and anger: occasionally, too, vouchsafing an encouraging nod to the speaker, which was anything but encouraging to the other party.

"You are quite right," said Mr. Hughes at length; on hearing which, Grimaldi felt quite wrong. "You are *quite* right—nothing can justify such actions, except one thing, and that is—

"Mr. Hughes," interrupted the *friend*, "I know your kind heart well,—so well, that I can perceive your charitable feelings are even now striving to discover some excuse or palliation for this offence; but permit me, as a disinterested observer, to tell you that nothing can justify a man in winning the affections of a young girl infinitely above him, and, at the same time, the daughter of one to whom he is so greatly indebted."

"Will you listen to me for half a minute?" inquired Mr. Hughes in a peculiarly calm tone.

"Certainly, sir," answered the other.

"Well, then, I was going to observe, at the moment when you somewhat rudely interrupted me, that I quite agreed with you, and that nothing can justify a man in acting in the manner you have described, unless, indeed, he has obtained the sanction of the young lady's parents; in which case he is of course at liberty to win her affections as soon as he likes, and she likes to let him."

"Assuredly, sir," responded the other; "but, in the present instance—"

"But, in the present instance," interrupted Mr. Hughes, "that happens to be the case. My daughter Maria has my full permission to marry Mr. Grimaldi; and I have no doubt she will avail herself of that permission in the course of a very few weeks."

The accuser was dumb-foundered, and Grimaldi was delighted,—now, for the first time, perceiving that Mr. Hughes had been amusing himself at the expense of the mischief-maker.

"Nevertheless," said Mr. Hughes, turning to his accepted son-in-law with a grave face, but through all the gravity of which he could perceive a struggling smile,—"Nevertheless, you acted

very wrong, Mr. Grimaldi, in kissing my daughter so publicly; and I beg that whenever for the future you and she deem it essential to indulge in such amusements, it may be done in private. This is rendered necessary by the laws which at present govern society, and I am certain will be far more consonant to the feelings and delicacy of the young lady in question."

With these words Mr. Hughes made a low bow to the officious and disinterested individual who had made the speech, and, opening the door, called to the servants to "show the gentleman out." Then turning to Grimaldi, he took him by the arm and walked towards the breakfast-room, declaring that the meal had been waiting half an hour or more, that the coffee would be cold, and Maria quite tired of waiting for him.

From this moment the course of true love ran smooth for once; and Mr. Hughes, in all his subsequent behaviour to Grimaldi, sufficiently evinced his high sense of the innate worth of a young man who, under very adverse circumstances and with many temptations to contend against, had behaved with so much honesty and candour.

On the Saturday after this pleasant termination

of a scene which threatened to be attended with very different results, the house in Penton Street was taken possession of, and next Easter Sunday the young couple were asked in church for the first time. Sadlers Wells opened as usual on Easter Monday, and Grimaldi appeared in a new part, a more prominent one than he had yet had, and one which increased his reputation considerably.

At this time, in consequence of his great exertions in this character, after four or five months of comparative rest, he began to feel some of those wastings of strength and prostrations of energy to which this class of performers are more peculiarly exposed, and which leave them, if they attain old age, as they left Grimaldi himself, in a state of great bodily infirmity and suffering. He was cheered throughout the play; but the applause of the audience only spirited him to increased exertions, and at the close of the performances he was so exhausted and worn-out that he could scarcely stand. It was with great difficulty that he reached his home, although the distance was so very slight; and immediately on doing so, he was obliged to be put to bed.

He was wont in after life frequently to remark, that if at one period of his career his gains were great, his labours were at least equally so, and deserved the return. He spoke from sad experience of their effects at that time, and he spoke the truth. It must be a very high salary indeed that could ever repay a man,—and especially a feeling, sensitive man, as Grimaldi really was,—for premature old age and early decay.

He awoke at eleven o'clock next day invigorated and refreshed; — this long rest was an extraordinary indulgence for him to take, for it was his constant habit to be up and dressed by seven o'clock or earlier, either attending to his pigeons, practising the violin, occupying himself in constructing such little models as have been before mentioned, or employing himself in some way. Idleness wearied him more than labour; he never could understand the gratification which many people seem to derive from having nothing to do.

It is customary on the morning after a new piece to "call" it upon the stage with a view of condensing it where it will admit of condensation, and making such improvements as the experience

of one night may have suggested. All the performers engaged in the piece of course attend these "calls," as any alterations will necessarily affect the dialogue of their parts, or some portions of the stage business connected with them.

Being one of the principal actors in the new drama, it was indispensably necessary that he should attend, and accordingly, much mortified at finding it so late, he dressed with all possible despatch and set forth towards the theatre.

CHAPTER VI.

1798.

Tribulations connected with "Old Lucas," the constable, with an account of the subsequent proceedings before Mr. Blamire, the magistrate, at Hatton Garden, and the mysterious appearance of a silver staff.—A guinea wager with a jocose friend on the Dartford Road.—The Prince of Wales, Sheridan, and the Crockery Girl.

At this time all the ground upon which Claremont, Myddleton, Lloyd, and Wilmington Squares have since been built, together with the numberless streets which diverge from them in all directions, was then pasture-land or garden-ground, bearing the name of Sadlers Wells Fields. Across these fields it was of course necessary that Grimaldi should pass and repass in going to and returning from the theatre. Upon this particular morning, a mob consisting of at least a thousand persons were actively engaged here in hunting an over-driven ox,—a diversion then in very high repute among the lower orders of the metropolis, but

which is now, happily for the lives and limbs of the more peaceable part of the community, falling into desuetude: there not being quite so many open spaces or waste ground to chase oxen in, as there used to be a quarter of a century ago. The mob was a very dense one, comprised of the worst characters, and perceiving that it would be a task of some difficulty to clear a passage through it, he paused for a minute or two, deliberating whether he had not better turn back at once and take the longer but less obstructed route by the Angel at Islington, when a young gentleman, whom he had never seen before, after eyeing him with some curiosity, walked up and said,

"Is not your name Grimaldi, sir?"

"Yes, sir, it is," replied the other. "Pray, may I inquire why you ask the question?"

"Because," answered the stranger, pointing to a man who stood among a little group of people hard by,—"Because I just now heard that gentleman mention it to a companion."

The person whom the young man pointed out was a very well-known character about Clerkenwell and its vicinity, being an object of detesta-

tion with the whole of the neighbourhood. This man was Lucas,—" Old Lucas" was his familiar appellation,—and he filled the imposing office of parish constable. Parish constables are seldom very popular in their own districts, but Old Lucas was more unpopular than any man of the same class, and if the stories which are current of him be correct, with very good reason, unless the man was dreadfully belied. In short, he was a desperate villain. It was very generally understood of him, that where no real accusation existed against a man, his course of proceeding was to invent a false one, and to bolster it up with the most unblushing perjury, and an ingenious system of false evidence, which he had never any difficulty in obtaining, for the purpose of pocketing certain small sums which, under the title of " expenses," were paid upon the conviction of the culprit.

Being well acquainted with this man's reputation, Grimaldi was much astonished, and not at all pleasantly so, by the information he had just received; and he inquired with considerable anxiety and apprehension, whether the young

man was quite certain that it was *his* name which the constable had mentioned.

"Quite certain," was the reply. "I can't have made any mistake upon the subject, because he wrote it down in his book."

"Wrote it down in his book!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

"Yes, he did indeed," replied the other: "and, more than that, I heard him say to another man beside him, that 'he could lay hold of you whenever he wanted you.'"

"The devil he did!" exclaimed Grimaldi. "What on earth can he want with me! Well, sir, at all events I have to thank you for your kindness in informing me, although I am not much wiser on the point than I was before."

Exchanging bows with the stranger, they separated; the young man mixing with the crowd, and Grimaldi turning back and going to the theatre by the longest road, with the double object of avoiding Old Lucas and keeping out of the way of the mad ox.

Having to attend to his business immediately on his arrival at the theatre, the circumstance

escaped his memory, nor did it occur to him again until he returned thither in the evening shortly before the performances commenced, when being reminded of it by some accidental occurrence, he related the morning's conversation to some of his more immediate associates, among whom were Dubois, a celebrated comic actor, another performer of the name of Davis, and Richer, a very renowned rope-dancer. His communication, however, elicited no more sympathetic reception than a general burst of laughter, which having subsided, they fell to bantering the unfortunate object of Old Lucas's machinations.

"That fellow Lucas," said Dubois, assuming a grave face, "is a most confirmed scoundrel; he would stick at nothing, not even at Joe's life, to gain a few pounds, or perhaps even a few shillings."

"Joe" looked none the happier for this observation, and another friend took up the subject.

"Lucas,—Lucas," said Richer; "that is the old man who wears spectacles, isn't it?"

"That's the man," replied Dubois; "the constable, you know. He hasn't written your

name down in his book for nothing, Joe, take my word for that."

"Precisely my opinion," said Davis; "he means to make a regular property out of him. Don't be frightened, Joe, that's all."

These prophetic warnings had a very serious effect upon the spirits of the party principally interested,—which his companions perceiving, hastened to carry on the joke, by giving vent to sundry other terrible surmises upon the particular crime with which the officer meant to charge him; one suggesting that it was murder, another that he thought it was forgery, (which made no great difference in the end, the offence being punished with the same penalty,) and a third good-naturedly remarking that perhaps it might not be quite so bad after all, although certainly Lucas did possess such weight with the magistrates that it was invariably two to one against the unfortunate person whom he charged with any offence.

Although he was at no loss to discern and appreciate the raillery of his friends, Grimaldi could not divest himself of some nervous appre-

hensions connected with the adventure of the morning; when, just as he was revolving in his mind all the improbabilities of the officer's entertaining any designs against him, one of the messengers of the theatre abruptly entered the room in which they were all seated, and announced that Mr. Grimaldi was wanted directly at the stage-door.

"Who wants me?" inquired Grimaldi, turning rather pale.

"It's a person in spectacles," replied the messenger, looking at the rest of the company and hesitating.

"A person in spectacles!" echoed the other, more agitated than before. "Did he give you his name, or do you know who he is?"

"Oh yes, I know who he is," answered the messenger, with something between a smile and a gasp; — "it's Old Lucas."

Upon this, there arose a roar of laughter, in which the messenger joined. Grimaldi was quite petrified, and stood rooted to the spot, looking from one to another with a face in which dismay and fear were visibly depicted.

Having exhausted themselves with laughing,

his companions regarding his unhappy face, began to grow serious, and Dubois said,

"Joe, my boy, a joke's a joke, you know. We have had one with you, and that was all fair enough, and it's all over; but if there is anything really serious in this matter, we will prove ourselves your friends, and support you against this old rascal in any way in our power."

All the others said something of the same sort, for which Grimaldi thanked them very heartily, being really in a state of great discomfort and entertaining many dismal forebodings. It was then proposed that everybody present should accompany him in a body to the stage-door, and be witnesses to anything that the thief-taker had to say or do; it being determined beforehand that in the event of his being insolent, he should be summarily put in the New River. Accordingly they went down in a body, bearing Joe in the centre; and sure enough at the door stood Old Lucas *in propriâ personâ*.

"Now, then, what's the matter?" said the leader of the guard: upon which Grimaldi summoned up courage, and echoing the inquiry, said, "What's the matter?" too.

"You must come with me to Hatton Garden," said the constable in a gruff voice. "Come, I can't afford to lose any more time."

Here arose a great outcry, mingled with various exclamations of "Where's your warrant?" and many consignments of Mr. Lucas to the warmest of all known regions.

"Where's your warrant?" cried Davis when the noise had in some measure subsided.

The officer deigned no direct reply to this inquiry, but looking at Grimaldi, demanded whether he was ready; in answer to which question the whole party shouted "No!" with tremendous emphasis.

"Look here, Lucas," said Dubois, stepping forward; "you are an old scoundrel!—no one knows that better, or perhaps could prove it easier, than I. Now, so far as concerns Mr. Grimaldi, all we have got to say is, either show us a warrant which authorises you to take him into custody, or take yourself into custody and take yourself off under penalty of a ducking!"

This speech was received with a shout of applause, not only by the speaker's companions, but by several idlers who had gathered round.

"I'm not a-talking to you, Mr. Dubois," said Lucas as soon as he could make himself heard;—"Mr. Grimaldi's my man. Now, sir, will you come along with me?"

"Not without a warrant," said the rope-dancer.

"Not without a warrant," added Davis.

"Not upon any consideration whatever," said Dubois. "Don't attempt to touch him without a warrant; or—"

"Or what?" inquired Lucas;—"or what, Mr. Dubois?—eh, sir?"

The answer was lost in a general chorus of "The River!"

This intimation, pronounced in a very determined manner, had a visible effect upon the officer, who, at once assuming a more subdued tone, said,

"Fact is, that I've not got a warrant; (a shout of derision;) fact is, it's not often that I'm asked for warrants, because people generally knows that I'm in authority, and thinks that's sufficient." (Another.) However, if Mr. Grimaldi and his friends press the objection, I shall not urge his going with me now, provided he promises and they promises on his behalf to attend at Hatton Garden Office afore Mr. Blamire at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning."

This compromise was at once acceded to, and Old Lucas turned to go away: but he did not entirely escape even upon this occasion, for while the above conversation was going forward at the door, the muster of people collected around had increased to a pretty large concourse. The greater part of them knew by sight both Grimaldi and the constable; and as the latter was about to depart, the lookers-on pressed round him, and a voice from the crowd cried out, "What's the matter, Joe?"

"The matter is this, gentlemen," said Dubois, returning to the top of the steps, and speaking with great vehemence and gesticulation:—"This rascal, gentlemen," pointing to the constable, "wants to drag Joe Grimaldi to prison, gentlemen."

"What for? what for?" cried the crowd.

"For doing nothing at all, gentlemen," replied the orator, who had reserved the loudest key of his voice for the concluding point.

This announcement was at once received with a general yell, which caused the constable to quicken his pace very considerably. The mob quickened theirs also, and in a few seconds the whole area

of Sadlers Wells yard rang with whoops and yells almost as loud as those which had assailed the ox in the morning; and Mr. Lucas made the best of his way to his dwelling, amidst a shower of mud, rotten apples, and other such missiles. The performances in the theatre went off as usual. After all was over, Grimaldi returned home to supper, having been previously assured by his friends that they would one and all accompany him to the Police-office in the morning, and having previously arranged so as to secure as a witness the young gentleman who had given the first information regarding the views and intentions of the worthy thief-taker.

At the appointed hour Grimaldi and his friends repaired to the Police-office, and were duly presented to Mr. Blamire, the sitting magistrate, who having received them with much politeness, requested Old Lucas, who was then and there in attendance, to state his case, which he forthwith proceeded to do.

He deposed, with great steadiness of nerve, that Joseph Grimaldi had been guilty of hunting, and inciting and inducing other persons to hunt, an over-driven ox, in the fields of Pentonville,

much to the hazard and danger of his Majesty's subjects, much to the worry and irritation of the animal, and greatly to the hazard of his being lashed into a state of furious insanity. Mr. Lucas deposed to having seen with his own eyes the offence committed, and in corroboration of his eyesight produced his companions of the morning, who confirmed his evidence in every particular. This, Mr. Lucas said, was his case.

The accused being called upon for his defence, stated the circumstances as they had actually occurred, and produced his young acquaintance, who, as it appeared, was the son of a most respectable gentleman in the neighbourhood. The young gentleman confirmed the account of the affair which had been given last; deposed to the accused not having been in the field more than two or three minutes altogether; to his never having been near the ox-hunters; and to his having gone to the theatre by a route much longer than his ordinary one, for the express purpose of avoiding the ox and his hunters, Mr. Lucas and his companions.

The magistrate heard all this conflicting evidence upon an apparently very unimportant ques-

tion with a great deal more patience and coolness than some of his successors have been in the habit of displaying, and after hearing it, and various audible and unreserved expressions of opinion from Mr. Dubois and others touching the respectability and probity of Lucas, turned to the accused and said,

"Mr. Grimaldi, I entirely believe your version of the affair to be the correct and true one; but I am about to act upon the deposition of this constable and his witness, and accordingly I must, however unwillingly, convict you in some penalty. I shall take care, though, that your punishment is one which shall be neither heavy to you nor serviceable to the complainant. I hereby order you to pay a fine of five shillings and to be discharged. As to you, Lucas, I would recommend you to be careful how you conduct yourself in future, and more especially to be careful as to the facts which you state upon oath."

After this decision, which his friends and himself looked upon as a complete triumph, they bowed to the magistrate and quitted the police-office, Grimaldi previously paying the five shillings which he had been fined, and an additional

shilling for his discharge. It was then proposed and unanimously agreed that the party should adjourn to a tavern called the King of Prussia, (now bearing the sign of the Clown) opposite Sadlers Wells theatre, for the purpose of having some lunch; and thither they proceeded and made themselves very merry with the mortified looks of Old Lucas, mingling with their mirth some dry and abstruse speculations upon the nature of the laws which compelled a magistrate to accept the oath of a reputed perjuror, and to convict upon it a person whom he conscientiously believed to be innocent of the offence laid to his charge.

While they were thus engaged, some person came running into the room, and, looking hastily round, cried, "Joe! Joe! here 's Old Lucas again." The friends began to laugh, and Grimaldi joined them, thinking that this was but a jest; but he was greatly mistaken, for in less than a minute Lucas entered the room.

"Why, Mister Constable!" exclaimed Dubois, rising angrily, "how dare you come here?"

"Because I have business," surlily replied Lucas. "Mr. Grimaldi has been very properly

convicted of an offence at the police-office, and sentenced to pay a fine of five shillings, besides one shilling more for his discharge: neither of these sums has he paid, so he is still my prisoner."

"Not paid?" exclaimed the accused. "Why, I paid the six shillings before I left the office."

This statement was corroborated by the friends, and the mute but eloquent testimony of his purse, which contained precisely that sum less than it had done an hour previously.

"It's no use," said Lucas, grinning: "pay the money, or come on with me."

"I have already paid all that was required, and I will neither give you another farthing nor allow myself to be made prisoner," was the reply.

"We 'll see that," responded the constable, advancing.

"Take care," said Grimaldi warningly: "venture to touch me, and to the ground you go!"

Not a bit daunted, Old Lucas darted upon him, dragged him from his seat, and attempted to force him towards the door; in doing which he managed to tear his waistcoat and shirt-collar literally

to ribands. Until then he had remained quite cool, merely acting upon the defensive; but now he gave way to his rage and fulfilled his threat to the letter by giving him a blow which felled him to the ground, and caused his nose to bleed in a manner neither sentimental nor picturesque.

He, however, immediately rose again, and producing his staff, was about, thus strengthened, to renew the combat, when a gentleman who chanced to be sitting in the room, a stranger to the party, rose, and drawing from his pocket a silver staff, shook it at Lucas, and said, "I will have no more of this violence! Let all parties adjourn to the police-office; and if Mr. Grimaldi's tale be true, and your purpose be merely that of endeavouring to extort money, as I have no doubt it is, I will take care that things be laid properly before the magistrate."

Lucas, who appeared to succumb before the vision of the silver staff, surlily assented, and they all presently presented themselves for the second time that day before Mr. Blamire, who was greatly astonished at their reappearance, and greatly surprised at the altered appearance of Old Lucas's face. The magistrate, moreover, seemed to know

the silver-staffed gentleman very well, and greeted him cordially.

"Well," said Mr. Blamire after the bustle of entrance had ceased, "what's the matter now? speak, — you, Lucas!"

"Your worship," said the person called upon, "Mr. Grimaldi was fined five shillings just now, and had to pay one for his discharge; all of which he left the office without doing."

"Indeed!—Is that true?" inquired the magistrate of the clerk in an under tone.

"No, sir," replied the latter with a slight but meaning smile.

"Go on, sir," said Mr. Blamire, addressing Lucas. Lucas was a little abashed at the "aside" confab between the magistrate and his clerk; but, affecting not to hear it, he continued, "Of course, therefore, he still remained my prisoner; and I followed him and insisted upon his paying the money. This he refused; I therefore collared him for the purpose of making him return here, and in so doing I tore his shirt and waistcoat. The moment he perceived I had done so, he —" Lucas paused for an instant, and Mr. Blamire filled up the sentence by saying,

"He gave you a blow on the nose?"

"Exactly so, sir," said Lucas eagerly.

"And very well you merited it," added the magistrate, in a tone which caused a general roar of laughter. "Well, Mr. Grimaldi, let us hear what *you* have to say."

He briefly recounted the circumstances; and when he had finished, the unknown with the silver staff advanced and corroborated the statement, making several severe remarks upon the private intentions and violent manner of Lucas.

"Who," says Grimaldi with profound respect and an air of great mystery,—"Who this gentleman was, I never could ascertain; but that he was a person possessing a somewhat high degree of authority was evident to me from the great respect paid to him at the police-office. Some one afterwards told me he was a city marshal, possessing power to exercise his authority without the city; but I know not whether he was so or not."

After this disguised potentate had given his testimony, which rendered the matter conclusive, Mr. Blamire said, "Place Lucas at the bar;" which being done, the magistrate proceeded to mulct him in a penalty of five pounds, the money to go to

the poor of the parish, and likewise ordered him to make Grimaldi every necessary reparation and amendment for the results of his violence.

On this sentence being pronounced, Old Lucas foamed at the mouth in a manner not unlike the over-driven ox, the original cause of his disaster, and protested, with many disrespectful oaths and other ebullitions of anger, that he would not pay one farthing: upon which the magistrate, nothing daunted, commanded him to be locked up forthwith, which was done, to the great delight and admiration not only of the friends and other spectators, but of the officers also, who, besides being in duty bound to express their admiration of all the magistrate did, participated in the general dislike of Old Lucas, as the persons best acquainted with his perjury and villainy.

The friends once again bade the magistrate good morning, and soon afterwards dispersed to their several homes. They heard next day that Old Lucas, after having been under lock and key for six hours, the whole of which time he devoted to howls and imprecations, paid the fine. A few hours after he was set at liberty, he wrote a very penitent letter to Grimaldi, expressing his

great regret for what had occurred, and his readiness to pay for the spoiled shirt and waistcoat upon being made acquainted with the amount of damage done. Grimaldi thought it better to let the matter remain where it did, thinking that, setting the broken nose against the torn shirt and waistcoat, Lucas was already sufficiently punished.

And after this "Old Lucas" never did anything more terrible, connected with the Sadlers Wells company at least, and, there is reason to believe, shortly afterwards lost his situation. Whether he did so or not is no great matter, further than that he appears to have been a most unfit personage to have been entrusted with any species of authority.

From this time forward, for several months, all went merry as a marriage bell. On the 11th of May following the little adventure just recorded, the marriage bell went too, for he was married to Miss Maria Hughes, at St. George's, Hanover-square, with the full consent and approbation of the young lady's parents, and to the unbounded joy of his own mother, by whom she had been from her earliest youth beloved as her daughter.

Five days after the wedding, the young couple paid their first visit to Mr. and Mrs. Hughes. After sitting a short time, Grimaldi left his wife there and went to the theatre, where a rehearsal in which he was wanted had been called for that morning. Upon entering the yard of Sadlers Wells, in which the different members of the company were strolling about until the rehearsal commenced, he was accosted by Richer with, "Joe, may I inquire the name of the lady with whom I saw you walking just now?"

"Nay, you need not ask him," cried Dubois: "I can tell you. It was Miss Maria Hughes."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Grimaldi; "that is not the lady's name."

"No!" exclaimed Dubois. "Why, I could have sworn it was Miss Hughes"

"You would have sworn wrong, then," he replied. "The lady's name *was* Hughes once, I grant; but on Monday last I changed it to Grimaldi."

His friends were greatly surprised at this intelligence, but they lost no time in disseminating it throughout the theatre. Congratulations poured in upon him, and so great was the excitement oc-

casioned by the fact of "Joe Grimaldi's marriage" becoming known, that the manager, after vainly endeavouring to proceed with the rehearsal, gave up the task and dismissed the company for that morning. In the evening they had a supper at the theatre to commemorate the event, and on the following Sunday "Joe" gave a dinner to the carpenters of the theatre for the same purpose. In the long-run all the members of the establishment, from the highest to the lowest, participated in the long-expected happiness of their single-hearted and good-natured comrade.

In the summer of this year he lost a guinea wager in a somewhat ludicrous manner,—in a manner sufficiently ludicrous to justify in this place the narration of the joke which gave rise to it. He was acquainted at that time with a very clever and popular writer, who happened to have occasion to pass through Gravesend on the same day as he had to go there; and, as they met shortly before, they agreed to travel in a post-chaise and share the expense between them. They arranged to start early in the morning, as Grimaldi had to play at Sadlers Wells at night, and did so.

The journey was very pleasant, and the hours passed quickly away. His companion, who was a witty and humorous fellow, was in great force upon the occasion, and, exerting all his powers, kept him laughing without intermission. About three miles on the London side of Dartford, the friend, whose buoyant and restless spirits prevented his sitting in any one position for a minute, began incessantly poking his head out of one or other of the chaise windows, and making various remarks on the landscape and the persons or vehicles passing to and fro. While thus engaged, he happened to catch sight of a man on horseback, about a quarter of a mile behind, who was travelling in the same direction with themselves, and was coming up after the chaise at a rapid pace.

"Look, Joe!" he said; "see that fellow behind! Well mounted, is he not?"

Grimaldi looked back and saw the man coming along at a fast trot. He was a stout, hearty fellow, dressed like a small farmer, as he very probably was, and was riding a strong horse of superior make, good pace, and altogether an excellent roadster.

"Yes, I see him," was his reply. "He 's well enough, but I see nothing particular about him, or the horse either."

"Nor is there anything particular about either of them that I am aware of," answered his companion; "but wouldn't you think, judging from the appearance of his nag, and the rate at which he is riding, that he would pass our chaise in a very short time?"

"Most unquestionably; he will pass us in a few seconds."

"I 'll tell you what, Joe, I 'll bet you a guinea he does not," said the friend.

"Nonsense!"

"Well, will you take it?"

"No, no; it would be robbing you."

"Oh, leave me to judge about that," said the friend; "I shall not consider it a robbery: and, so far from that, I 'm willing to make the bet more in your favour.—Come, I 'll bet you a guinea, Joe, that that man don't pass our chaise between this and Dartford."

"Done!" said Grimaldi, well knowing that, unless some sudden and most unaccountable change took place in the pace at which the man

was riding, he must pass in a minute or two—"done!"

"Very good," said the other.—"Stop—I forgot: remember that if you laugh or smile, so that he can see you, between this and Dartford, you will have lost. Is that agreed?"

"Oh, certainly," replied Grimaldi, very much interested to know by what mode his friend proposed to win the wager,—"certainly."

He did not remain very long in expectation: the horseman drew nearer and nearer, and the noise of his horse's feet was heard close behind the chaise, when the friend, pulling a pistol from his pocket, suddenly thrust his head and shoulders out of the window and presented the pistol full at the face of the unconscious countryman, assuming at the same time a ferocious countenance and menacing air which were perfectly alarming. Grimaldi was looking through the little window at the back of the chaise, and was like to die with laughter when he witnessed the effect produced by this singular apparition.

The countryman was coming along at the same hard trot, with a very serious and business-like countenance, when, all of a sudden, half a man

and the whole of a pistol were presented from the chaise window; which he no sooner beheld, than all at once he pulled up with a jerk which almost brought him into a ditch, and threw the horse upon his haunches. His red face grew very pale, but he had the presence of mind to pat his beast on the neck and soothe him in various ways, keeping his eyes fixed on the chaise all the time and looking greatly astonished. After a minute or so, he recovered himself, and, giving his horse the spur, and a smart cut in the flank with his riding whip, dashed across the road, with the view of passing the chaise on the opposite side. The probability of this attempt had been foreseen, however, by the other party, for with great agility he transferred himself to the other window, and, thrusting out the pistol with the same fierce and sanguinary countenance as before, again encountered the farmer's gaze; upon which he pulled up, with the same puzzled and frightened expression of countenance, and stared till his eyes seemed double their natural size.

The scene became intensely droll. The countryman's horse stood stock still, but as the chaise rolled on, he gradually suffered him to fall into a gentle trot, and, with an appearance of deep per-

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plexity, was evidently taking counsel with himself how to act. Grimaldi had laughed in a corner till he was quite exhausted, and seeing his guinea was fairly lost, determined to aid the joke. With this view, he looked out of the vacant window, and, assuming an authoritative look, nodded confidentially to the horseman, and waved his hand as if warning him not to come too near. This caution the countryman received with much apparent earnestness, frequently nodding and waving his hand after the same manner, accompanying the pantomime with divers significant winks, to intimate that he understood the gentleman was insane, and that he had accidentally obtained possession of the dangerous weapon. Grimaldi humored the notion of his being the keeper, occasionally withdrawing his head from the window to indulge in peals of laughter. The friend, bating not an inch of his fierceness, kept the pistol pointed at the countryman; and the countryman followed on behind at an easy pace on the opposite side of the road, continuing to exchange most expressive pantomime with one of its best professors, and to reciprocate as nearly as he could, all the nods and winks and shrugs with which

Grimaldi affected to deplore the situation of his unhappy friend. And so they went into Dartford. When they reached the town, the friend resumed his seat, and Grimaldi paid the guinea. The instant the pistol barrel was withdrawn, the countryman set spurs to his horse, and scoured through the town, to the great astonishment of its inhabitants, at full gallop.

The success of this guinea wager put the friend upon telling a story of a wager of Sheridan's which was much talked of at the time, and ran thus:—

George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, used occasionally to spend certain hours of the day in gazing from the windows of a club-house in St. James's Street;—of course he was always surrounded by some of his chosen companions, and among these Sheridan, who was then the Drury Lane lessee, was ever first and foremost. The Prince and Sheridan in these idle moments had frequently remarked among the passers backwards and forwards a young woman who regularly every day carried through the street a heavy load of crockery-ware, and who, the Prince frequently remarked, must be possessed of very great strength and dexterity to be able to bear so heavy a burden with so

much apparent ease, and to carry it in the midst of such a crowd of passengers without ever stumbling.

One morning, as usual, she made her appearance in the street from Piccadilly, and Sheridan called the Prince's attention to the circumstance.

"Here she is," said Sheridan.

"Who?" inquired the Prince.

"The crockery-girl," replied Sheridan; "and more heavily laden than ever."

"Not more so than usual, I think," said the Prince.

"Pardon me, your Highness, I think I 'm right. Oh, dear me, yes! it 's decidedly a larger basket, a much larger basket," replied Sheridan. "Good God, she staggers under it! Ah! she has recovered herself.—Poor girl, poor girl!"

The Prince had watched the girl very closely, but the symptoms of exhaustion which Sheridan had so feelingly deplored were nevertheless quite invisible to him.

"She will certainly fall," continued Sheridan in a low abstracted tone; "that girl will fall down before she reaches this house."

"Pooh, pooh!" said the Prince. "*She* fall! —nonsense! she is too well used to it."

"She will," said Sheridan.

"I'll bet you a cool hundred she does not," replied the Prince.

"Done!" cried Sheridan.

"Done!" repeated his Royal Highness.

The point of the story is, that the girl *did fall down just before she reached the club-house.* It was very likely an accident, inasmuch as people seldom fall down on purpose, especially when they carry crockery; but still there were not wanting some malicious persons who pretended to trace the tumble to another source. At all events, it was a curious coincidence, and a strong proof of the accuracy of Sheridan's judgment in such matters, any way.

The friend told this story while they were changing horses, laughing very much when he had finished, as most people's friends do: and, as if it had only whetted his appetite for fun, at once looked out for another object on whom to exercise his turn for practical joking. The chaise, after moving very slowly for some yards, came to a dead stop behind some heavy waggons which obstructed the road. This stoppage chanced to occur directly opposite the principal inn, from one

of the coffee-room windows of which, on the first floor, a gentleman was gazing into the street. He was a particularly tall, big man, wearing a military frock and immense mustachios, and eyeing the people below with an air of much dignity and grandeur. The jester's eyes no sooner fell upon this personage than he practised a variety of devices to attract his attention, such as coughing violently, sneezing, raising the window of the chaise and letting it fall again with a great noise, and tapping loudly at the door. At length he clapped his hands and accompanied the action with a shrill scream; upon which the big man looked down from his elevation with a glare of profound scorn, mingled with some surprise. Their eyes no sooner met than the man in the chaise assumed a most savage and unearthly expression of countenance, which gave him all the appearance of an infuriated maniac. After grimacing in a manner sufficiently uncouth to attract the sole and undivided attention of the big man, he suddenly produced the pistol from his pocket, and, pretending to take a most accurate aim at the warrior's person, cocked it and placed his hand upon the trigger.

The big man's face grew instantly blanched, he put his hands to his head, made a step, or rather stagger back, and instantly disappeared, having either fallen or thrown himself upon the floor. The friend put his pistol in his pocket without the most remote approach to a smile or the slightest change of countenance, and Grimaldi sank down to the bottom of the chaise nearly suffocated with laughter.

At Gravesend they parted, the friend going on in the same chaise to Dover, and Grimaldi, after transacting the business which brought him from town, returning to play at the theatre at night; all recollection even of the "Dartford Blues" fading as he passed through the town in his way home, before the exploits of his merry friend, which afforded him matter for diversion until he reached London.

CHAPTER VII.

1798 to 1801.

Partiality of George the Third for Theatrical Entertainments. —Sheridan's kindness to Grimaldi.—His domestic affliction and severe distress.—The production of Harlequin Amulet a new era in Pantomime.—Pigeon-fancying and Wagering. —His first Provincial Excursion with Mrs. Baker, the eccentric Manageress. —John Kemble and Jew Davis, with a new reading.—Increased success at Maidstone and Canterbury.—Polite interview with John Kemble.

The summer passed pleasantly away, the whole of Grimaldi's spare time being devoted to the society of his wife and her parents, until the departure of the latter from London for Weymouth, of which theatre Mr. Hughes was the proprietor. It is worthy of remark as a proof of the pleasure which George the Third derived from theatrical entertainments, that when the court were at Weymouth, he was in the habit of visiting the theatre at least four times a week; generally on such occasions commanding the per-

formances, and taking with him a great number of the noblemen and ladies in his suite.

Drury Lane opened for the season on the 20th of September, and Sadlers Wells closed ten days afterwards: but while the latter circumstance released Grimaldi from his arduous labours at one theatre, the former one did not tend to increase them at the other, for pantomime was again eschewed at Drury Lane, and Blue Beard, Feudal Times, and Lodoiska reigned paramount. At the commencement of the season he met Mr. Sheridan, when the following colloquy ensued:—

"Well, Joe, still living—eh?"

"Yes, sir; and, what 's more, married as well."

"Oho! Pretty young woman, Joe?"

"Very pretty, sir."

"That 's right! You must lead a domestic life, Joe: nothing like a domestic life for happiness, Joe; I lead a domestic life myself." And then came one of those twinkling glances which no one who ever saw them can forget the humour of.

"I mean to do so, sir."

"Right. But, Joe, what will your poor little wife do while you are at the theatre of an evening? Very bad thing, Joe, to let a pretty young

wife be alone of a night. I 'll manage it for you, Joe: I 'll put her name down upon the free list; herself and friend.—But, mind, it 's a female friend, that 's all, Joe; any other might be dangerous,—eh, Joe?" And away he went without pausing for a moment to listen to Grimaldi's expressions of gratitude for his thoughtful kindness. However, he did not omit performing his friendly offer, and his wife, availing herself of it, went to the theatre almost every night he played, sat in the front of the house until he had finished, and then they went home together.

In this pleasant and quiet manner the autumn and winter passed rapidly away. In the following year, 1799, it became apparent that his young wife would shortly make him a father; and while this prospect increased the happiness and attention of her husband and parents, it added little to their slight stock of cares and troubles, for they were too happy and contented to entertain any other but cheerful anticipations of the result.

There is little to induce one to dwell upon a sad and melancholy chapter in the homely life of every-day. After many months of hope, and some of fear, and many lingering changes from

better to worse, and back and back again, his dear wife, whom he had loved from a boy with so much truth and feeling, and whose excellencies to the last moment of his life, many years afterwards, were the old man's fondest theme, died.

"Poor Joe! Oh, Richard, be kind to poor Joe!" were the last words she uttered. They were addressed to her brother. A few minutes afterwards, he sat beside a corpse.

They found in her pocket-book a few pencilled lines, beneath which she had written her wish that when she died they might be inscribed above her grave:

> Earth builds on Earth like glittering gold;
> Earth says to Earth, We are but mould:
> Earth builds on Earth castles and towers,
> Earth says to Earth, All shall be ours.

They were placed upon the tablet erected to her memory. She died on the 18th of October 1799, and was buried in the family vault of Mr. Hughes, at St. James's, Clerkenwell.

In the first passion of his grief the widower went distracted. Nothing but the constant attention and vigilance of his friends, who never left him alone, would have prevented his laying violent hands upon his life. There were none to

console him, except with sympathy, for his friends were hers, and all mourned no common loss.

Mr. Richard Hughes, the brother, never forgot his sister's dying words, but proved himself under all circumstances and at all times Grimaldi's firm and steady friend. The poor fellow haunted the scenes of his old hopes and happiness for two months, and was then summoned to the theatre to set the audience in a roar; and chalking over the seams which mental agony had worn in his face, was hailed with boisterous applause in the merry Christmas pantomime!

The title of this pantomime, which was produced at Drury Lane, was, "Harlequin Amulet, or the Magic of Mona:" it was written by Mr. Powell, and produced under the superintendence of Mr. James Byrne, the ballet-master. It was highly successful, running without intermission from the night of its production until Easter 1800. This Harlequinade was distinguished by several unusual features besides its great success foremost among them was an entire change both in the conception of the character of Harlequin and in the costume. Before that time it had been customary to attire the Harlequin in a loose

jacket and trousers, and it had been considered indispensable that he should be perpetually attitudinizing in five positions, and doing nothing else but passing instantaneously from one to the other, and never pausing without being in one of the five. All these conventional notions were abolished by Byrne, who this year made his first appearance as Harlequin, and made Harlequin a very original person to the play-going public. His attitudes and jumps were all new, and his dress was infinitely improved: the latter consisted of a white silk shape, fitting without a wrinkle, and into which the variegated silk patches were woven, the whole being profusely covered with spangles, and presenting a very sparkling appearance. The innovation was not resisted: the applause was enthusiastic; "nor," says Grimaldi, "was it undeserved; for, in my judgment, Mr. James Byrne was at that time the best Harlequin on the boards, and never has been excelled, even if equalled, since that period."

The alteration soon became general, and has proved a lasting one, Harlequin having been ever since attired as upon this memorable occasion, in accordance with the improved taste of his then representative.

Grimaldi's part in this production was a singularly arduous and wearying one: he had to perform Punch, and to change afterwards to Clown. He was so exceedingly successful in the first-mentioned part, that Mr. Sheridan wished him to preserve the character throughout,—a suggestion which he was compelled resolutely to oppose. His reason for doing so will not be considered extraordinary, when we inform the present generation that his personal decorations consisted of a large and heavy hump on his chest, and a ditto, ditto on his back, a high sugar-loaf cap, a long-nosed mask, and heavy wooden shoes;—the weight of the whole dress, and of the humps, nose, and shoes especially, being exceedingly great. Having to exercise all his strength in this costume, and to perform a vast quantity of what in professional language is termed "comic business," he was compelled by fatigue, at the end of the sixth scene, to assume the Clown's dress, and so relieve himself from the immense weight which he had previously endured. "The part of Columbine," he tells us, "was supported by Miss Menage; and admirably she sustained it. I thought at the time that, taking them together, I never saw so

good a Harlequin and Columbine; and I still entertain the same opinion."

Harlequin Amulet being played every night until Easter, he had plenty to do: but although his body was fatigued, his mind was relieved by constant employment, and he had little time, in the short intervals between exertion and repose, to brood over the heavy misfortune which had befallen him. Immediately after his wife's death, he had removed from the scene of his loss to a house in Baynes' Row, and he gradually became more cheerful and composed.

In this new habitation he devoted his leisure hours to the breeding of pigeons, and for this purpose had a room, which fanciers term a *dormer*, constructed at the top of his house, where he used to sit for hours together watching the birds as they disported in the air above him. At one time he had upwards of sixty pigeons, all of the very first order and beauty, and many of them highly valuable; in proof of which, he notes down with great pride a bet concerning one pigeon of peculiar talents, made with Mr. Lambert, himself a pigeon-fancier.

This Mr. Lambert being, as Grimaldi says,

"like myself, a pigeon-fancier, but, unlike myself, a confirmed boaster," took it into his head to declare and pronounce his birds superior in all respects to those in any other collection. This comprehensive declaration immediately brought all the neighbouring pigeon-breeders up in arms; and Grimaldi, taking up the gauntlet on behalf of the inmates of the "dormer," accepted a bet offered by Lambert, that there was no pigeon in his flight capable of accomplishing twenty miles in twenty minutes. The sum at stake was twenty pounds. The money was posted, the bird exhibited, the day on which the match should come off named, and the road over which the bird was to fly agreed upon, — the course being from the twentieth mile-stone on the Great North Road to Grimaldi's house. At six o'clock in the morning, the bird was consigned to the care of a friend, with instructions to throw it up precisely as the clock struck twelve, at the appointed mile-stone, near St. Albans; and the friend and the pigeon, accompanied by a gentleman on behalf of the opposite party, started off, all parties concerned first setting their watches by Clerkenwell church. It was a very dismal day, the snow being very

deep on the ground, and a heavy sleet falling, very much increasing the odds against the birds, the weather, of course, having great effect, and the snow frequently blinding them. There was no stipulation made, however, for fine weather; so at twelve o'clock the two parties, accompanied by several friends, took up their station in the dormer. In exactly nineteen minutes afterwards the pigeon alighted on the roof of the house. An offer of twenty pounds was immediately made for the bird, but it was declined.

The pigeons, however, did not always keep such good hours, or rather minutes; for sometimes they remained away so long on their aërial excursions, that their owner gave them up in despair. On one occasion they were absent upwards of four hours. As their owner was sitting disconsolately, concluding they were gone for ever, his attention was attracted by the apparently unaccountable behaviour of three birds who had been left behind, and who, with their heads elevated in the air, were all gazing with intense earnestness at one portion of the horizon. After straining his eyes for a length of time without avail, their master began to fancy that he dis-

cerned a small black speck a great height above him. He was not mistaken, for by-and-by the black speck turned out, to his infinite joy, to be the lost flight of pigeons returning home, after a journey probably of several hundred miles.

When the pantomime had ceased to run, Grimaldi had but little to do at Drury Lane, his duties being limited to a combat or some such business in Lodoiska, Feudal Times, and other spectacles, which he could well manage to reach the theatre in time for, after the performances at Sadlers Wells were over. Drury Lane closed in June, and reopened in September, ten days after the season at Sadlers Wells had terminated; but as he did not expect to be called into active service until December, he played out of town, for the first time in his life, in the month of November.

There was at that time among the Sadlers Wells company a clever man named Lund, who in the vacation time usually joined Mrs. Baker's company on the Rochester circuit. His benefit was fixed to take place at Rochester on the 15th, and coming to town, he waited on Grimaldi and entreated him to play for him on the occasion. Whenever it was in his power to accede to such a request it

was his invariable custom not to refuse: he therefore willingly returned an answer in the affirmative.

He reached Rochester about noon on the day fixed for the benefit, rehearsed half-a-dozen pantomime scenes, and having dined, went to the theatre, every portion of which was crammed before six o'clock. On his appearance he was received with a tremendous shout of welcome; his two comic songs were each encored three times, and the whole performances went off with great eclat. Mrs. Baker the manager, or manageress, at once offered him an engagement for the two following nights, the receipts of the house to be divided between them. His acceptance of this proposal delighted the old lady so much, that the arrangement was no sooner concluded than she straightway walked upon the stage, dressed in the bonnet and shawl in which she had been taking the money and giving the checks, and in an audible voice gave out the entertainments herself, to the immense delight of the audience, who shouted vociferously.

This old lady appears to have been a very droll personage. She managed all her affairs herself, and her pecuniary matters were con-

ducted on a principle quite her own. She never put her money out at interest, or employed it in any speculative or profitable manner, but kept it in six or eight large punch-bowls, which always stood upon the top shelf of a bureau, except when she was disposed to make herself particularly happy, and then she would take them down singly, and after treating herself with a sly look at their contents, put them up again.

This old lady had a factotum to whom attached the elegant sobriquet of "Bony Long;" the gentleman's name being Long, and his appearance bony. At a supper after the play, at which the guests were Lund, Grimaldi, Henry and William Dowton (sons of the celebrated actor of that name), the manageress, and "Bony," it was arranged that Grimaldi should perform Scaramouch in Don Juan on the following night. A slight difficulty occurred in consequence of his having brought from London no other dress than a clown's; but Mrs. Baker provided against it by sending for one Mr. Palmer, then a respectable draper and tailor at Rochester, who, having received the actor's instructions, manufactured for him the best Scaramouch dress he ever wore.

The assurances which were given the artist at the time that his abilities lay in the theatrical way were not without good foundation, for two years afterwards he left Rochester, came to London, and became principal master-tailor at Covent Garden Theatre. He held the situation for some years, and then removed to Drury Lane and filled the same office, which he still continues to hold.

On the second night, the house was filled in every part, and a great number of persons were turned away. On the following evening, on which he made his last appearance, and repeated the part of Scaramouch together with that of Clown, the orchestra was turned into boxes, seats were fitted up on every inch of available room behind the scenes, and the receipts exceeded in amount those of any former occasion.

At another supper that night with Mrs. Baker, he made an arrangement to join her company for a night or two at Maidstone in the following March, provided his London engagements would admit of his doing so. They were not at all behindhand with the money; for at eight o'clock next morning "Bony Long" repaired to his lodgings, taking with him an account of the two nights' receipts, Grimaldi's share whereof came to

160*l.* which was at once paid over to him, down upon the nail, all in three-shilling pieces. This was an addition to his baggage which he had not expected, and he was rather at a loss how to convey his loose silver up to town, when he was relieved by a tavern-keeper, who being as glad to take the silver as Grimaldi was to get notes, very soon made the exchange to the satisfaction of all parties. Having had this satisfactory settlement with the old lady, Grimaldi took his leave, and returned to town, not at all displeased with the success which had attended his first professional excursion from London.

At Christmas, Harlequin Amulet was revived at Drury Lane, in place of a new pantomime, and ran without interruption till the end of January following: drawing as much money as it had in the previous year. It was during this season or about this time that Grimaldi's old friend Davis, or "Jew Davis," as he was called, made his first appearance at Drury Lane. This is the man whose eccentricity gave rise to a ludicrous anecdote of John Kemble, of which the following is a correct version.

Kemble was once "starring" in the north of England, and paid a visit to the provincial theatre

in which Jew Davis was engaged, where he was announced for Hamlet. Every member of the little company was necessarily called into requisition, and Jew Davis was "cast" to play the first grave-digger. All went well until the first scene of the fifth act, being the identical one in which Davis was called upon to appear: and here the equanimity and good temper of Kemble were considerably shaken: the grave-digger's representative having contracted a habit of grimacing which, however valuable in burlesque or farce, was far from being at all desirable in tragedy, and least of all in that philosophical tragedy of which Hamlet is the hero. But if the actor had contracted a habit of grimacing upon his part, the audience upon its part had contracted an equally constant habit of laughing at him: so the great tragedian moralizing over the skull of Yorick was frequently interrupted by the loud roars of laughter attendant upon the grave-digger's strangely comical and increasing grins.

This greatly excited the wrath of Kemble, and after the play was finished he remonstrated somewhat angrily with Davis upon the subject, requesting that such "senseless buffoonery" might

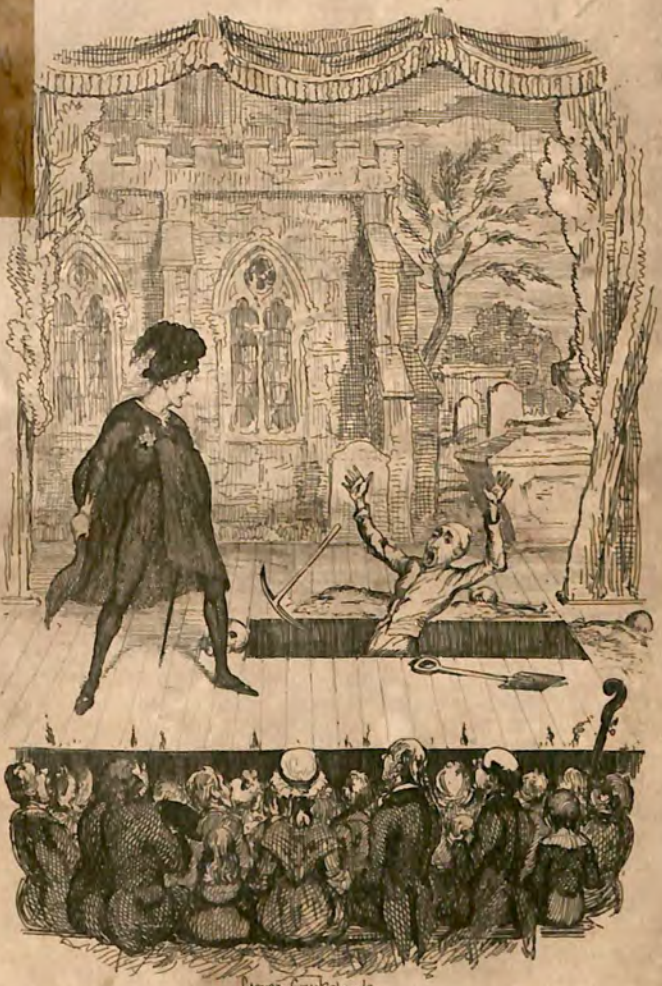
not be repeated in the event of their sustaining the same parts on any subsequent occasion. All this was far from answering the end proposed: the peculiarities of temper belonging to Jew Davis were aroused, and he somewhat tartly replied that he did not wish to be taught his profession by Mr. Kemble. The latter took no further notice of the subject, but pursued the even tenour of his way with so beneficial an effect upon the treasury that his engagement was renewed for "a few nights more," and on the last of these "few nights" Hamlet was again the play performed.

As before, all went well till the grave-digger's scene commenced; when Kemble, while waiting for his "cue" to go on, listened bodingly to the roars of laughter which greeted the colloquy of Davis and his companion. At length he entered; and at the same moment, Davis having manufactured a grotesque visage, was received with a shout of laughter which greatly tended to excite the anger of "King John." His first words were spoken, but failed to make any impression; and upon turning towards Davis, he discovered that worthy standing in the grave displaying a series

of highly unsuitable although richly comic grimaces.

In an instant all Kemble's good temper vanished, and stamping furiously upon the stage, he expressed his anger and indignation in a muttered exclamation closely resembling an oath. This ebullition of momentary excitement produced an odd and unexpected effect. No sooner did Davis hear the exclamation and the loud stamping of the angry actor, than he instantly raised his hands above his head in mock terror, and, clasping them together as if he were horrified by some dreadful spectacle, threw into his face an expression of intense terror, and uttered a frightful cry, half shout and half scream, which electrified his hearers. Having done this, he very coolly laid himself flat down in the grave, (of course disappearing from the view of the audience,) nor could any entreaties prevail upon him to emerge from it, or to repeat one word more. The scene was done as well as it could be without a grave-digger, and the audience while it was proceeding, loudly expressed their apprehensions from time to time, "that some accident had happened to Mr. Davis."

Some months after this, Sheridan happening to



George Cruikshank.

A startling effect

see Davis act in the provinces, and being struck with his talents, (he was considered the best stage Jew upon the boards,) engaged him for Drury Lane; and, in that theatre, on the first day of the ensuing season, he was formally introduced by Sheridan to John Kemble, then stage-manager. By the latter he was not immediately recognised, although Kemble evidently remembered having seen him somewhere; but, after a time plainly devoted to consideration, he said,

"Oh,—ah, ah! I recollect now: you, sir, you are the gentleman who suddenly went into the grave and forgot to come out again, I think."

Davis admitted the fact without equivocation, and hastened to apologise for his ill-timed jesting. The affair was related to Sheridan, to whom, it is needless to say, it afforded the most unbounded delight, and all three, joining in a hearty laugh, dismissed the subject.

When Harlequin Amulet was withdrawn, there was very little for Grimaldi to do during the rest of the season. On the 4th of March, therefore, in pursuance of his previous arrangement, he joined the old lady at Maidstone, and was announced for Scaramouch.

The announcement of his name excited an unwonted sensation in this quiet little town. As early as half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, the street in front of the theatre was rendered quite impassable by the vast crowd of persons that surrounded the doors. Mrs. Baker, who had never beheld such a scene in her lifetime, became at first very much delighted, and then very much frightened. After some consideration, she despatched a messenger for an extra quantity of constables, and upon their arrival threw the doors open at once, previously placing herself in the pay-box, according to custom, to take the money.

"Now, then, pit or box, pit or gallery, box or pit?" was her constant and uninterrupted cry.

"Pit, pit!" from half-a-dozen voices, the owners clinging to the little desk to prevent themselves from being carried away by the crowd before they had paid.

"Then pay two shillings,—pass on, Tom-fool!" such was the old lady's invariable address to evreybody on busy nights, without the slightest reference to their quality or condition.

On this occasion of the doors being opened at five o'clock, when the house was quite full she

locked up the box in which the money was deposited, and going round to the stage, ordered the performances to be commenced immediately, remarking, with a force of reasoning which it was impossible to controvert, that "the house could be but full, and being full to the ceiling now, they might just as well begin at once and have it over so much the sooner." The performance accordingly began without delay, to the great satisfaction of the audience, and terminated shortly after nine o'clock.

Grimaldi was very much caressed by the town's people, and received several invitations to dinner next day from gentlemen residing in the neighbourhood; all of which he declined however, being already engaged to the eccentric manageress, who would hardly allow him out of her sight. Happening to walk about the town in the course of the morning, he was recognised and saluted by the boys, in the same way as when he walked the streets of London. On the night of his second appearance the house was again crowded, the door-keepers having managed, indeed, by some ingenious contrivance to squeeze three pounds more into it than on the previous night. The first even-

ing produced 154*l.* and the second 157*l.* Of the gross sum his share was 155*l.* 17*s.* which was promptly paid to him after supper on the second and last night.

The old lady had no sooner handed it over through the ever useful "Bony," than she proposed to Grimaldi to go on with them to Canterbury, and to act there for the next two nights upon similar terms. He no sooner signified his willingness to do so, than she directed bills for distribution to be made out and sent to the printer's instantly. They were composed and printed by four o'clock in the morning. No sooner did they arrive wet from the press, than men on horseback were immediately despatched with them to Canterbury, about which city the whole impression was circulated and posted before nine o'clock. The old lady had theatres at Rochester, Maidstone, and Canterbury, besides many other towns in the circuit, and the size of the whole being very nearly the same, the scenery which was suitable to one fitted them all. Early in the morning the whole company left Maidstone for Canterbury, whither Grimaldi followed in a post-chaise at his leisure. When he arrived there about one o'clock, every-

thing was ready; no rehearsal was necessary, for there were the same performers, the same musicians, scene-shifters, and lamp-lighters. Having inspected the box-book, which notified that every takeable seat in the house was taken, he retired to Mrs. Baker's sitting-room, which was the very model of the one at Maidstone and at Rochester too, and found a good dinner awaiting his arrival. Here he was, and here they all were, in the city of Canterbury, about twenty miles from Maidstone, at one o'clock in the day, with the same scenery, dresses, decorations, and transformations as had been in use at the latter theatre late over-night, surrounded by the same actors, male and female, and playing in the same pieces which had been represented by the same men and women and the same adjuncts fourteen hours before at Maidstone.

He played here two nights, as had been agreed upon, to very nearly the same houses as at Maidstone; the first night's cash being 151*l.* 3*s.*, and the second 159*l.* 17*s.*, of which he received 155*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* Early the next morning he returned to London with 311*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* in his pocket, the profits he had acquired during an absence from the metropolis of only four days' duration.

Shortly after his return to town, and about a week before Easter, he saw with great astonishment that it was announced, or, to use the theatrical term, "underlined," in the Drury Lane bills, that Harlequin Amulet would be revived at Easter, and that Mr. Grimaldi would sustain his original character. This announcement being in direct violation of his articles of agreement at Drury Lane, and wholly inconsistent with the terms of his engagement at Sadlers Wells, he had no alternative but at once to wait upon Mr. John Kemble, the stage-manager of the former theatre, and explain to him the exact nature of his position.

He found John Kemble at the theatre, who received him with all the grandeur and authority of demeanour which it was his habit to assume when he was about to insist upon something which he knew would be resisted. Grimaldi bowed, and Kemble formally and gravely touched his hat.

"Joe," said Kemble with great dignity, "what is the matter?"

In reply, Grimaldi briefly stated his case, pointing out that he was engaged by his articles at Drury to play in last pieces at and after Easter, but not in pantomime; that at Sadlers Wells he

was bound to perform in the first piece; that these distinct engagements had never before been interfered with by the management of either theatre in the most remote manner upon any one occasion; and that, however much he regretted the inconvenience to which his refusal might give rise, he could not possibly perform the part for which he had been announced at Drury Lane.

Kemble listened to these representations with a grave and unmoved countenance; and when Grimaldi had finished, after waiting a moment, as if to make certain that he had really concluded, rose from his seat, and said in a solemn tone, "Joe, one word here, sir, is as good as a thousand—you *must* come!"

Joe felt excessively indignant at this, not merely because *must* is a disagreeable word in itself, but because he conceived that the tone in which it was uttered rendered it additionally disagreeable; so, saying at once what the feeling of the moment prompted, he replied, "Very good, sir. In reply to *must*, there is only one thing that can very well be said:—I will *not* come, sir."

"Will not, Joe,—eh?" said Kemble.

"I will not, sir," replied Grimaldi.

"Not!" said Kemble again with great emphasis.

Grimaldi repeated the monosyllable with equal vehemence.

"Then, Joe," said Kemble, taking off his hat and bowing in a ghost-like manner, "I wish you a very good morning!"

Grimaldi took off his hat, made another low bow, and wished Mr. Kemble good morning; and so they parted.

Next day his name was taken from the bills, and that of some other performer, quite unknown to the London stage, was inserted instead; which performer, when he did come out, went in again, —for he failed so signally that the pantomime was not played after the Monday night.

In the short interval between this interview and the Easter holidays, Grimaldi was engaged in the study of a new part for Sadlers Wells, which was a very prominent character in a piece bearing the sonorous and attractive title of the Great Devil. He entertained very strong hopes that both the part and the piece would be very successful; and how far his expectations were borne out by subsequent occurrences, the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER VIII.

1801 to 1803.

Hard work to counterbalance great gains.—Smart running against time.—His discharge *from* Drury Lane, and his discharge *at* Sadlers Wells.—His return to the former house.—Monk Lewis—Anecdote of him and Sheridan, and of Sheridan and the Prince of Wales.—Grimaldi gains a Son and loses all his Capital.

THE "Great Devil" came out on Easter Monday, and its success entailed upon Grimaldi no inconsiderable degree of trouble and fatigue. He played two parts in it, and, to say nothing of such slight exertions as acting and fighting, had to change his dress no fewer than nineteen times in the progress of the piece. It made a great noise, and ran the whole season through.

As we had occasion to notice in the last chapter the ease with which he acquired a large sum of money by his professional exertions, and as we may have to describe other large gains hereafter, it may not be amiss to show in this place how much of fatigue and harassing duty those exer-

tions involved, and how much of bodily toil and fatigue he had to endure before those gains could be counted.

At Sadlers Wells he commenced the labour of the evening by playing a long and arduous part in the before-mentioned "Great Devil;" after this he played in some little burletta which immediately succeeded it; upon the conclusion of that, he was clown to the rope-dancer; and, as a wind-up to the entertainments, he appeared as clown, in the pantomime, always singing two comic songs in the course of the piece, both of which were regularly encored. He had then to change his dress with all possible speed, and to take a hurried walk, and often a rapid run, to Drury Lane, to perform in the last piece.

This immense fatigue, undergone six days out of every seven, left him at the conclusion of the week completely worn out and thoroughly exhausted, and, beyond all doubt, by taxing his bodily energies far beyond their natural powers, sowed the first seeds of that extreme debility and utter prostration of strength from which in the latter years of his life he suffered so much. The old man had a good right to say that, if his gains had been occa-

sionally great, they were won by labour more than proportionate.

Occasionally, when the performances at Sadlers Wells were prolonged so that the curtain fell very nearly at the same time as the concluding piece at Drury Lane began, he was so pressed for time as to be compelled to dart out of the former theatre at his utmost speed, and never to stop until he reached his dressing-room at the latter. That he could use his legs to pretty good advantage at this period of his life, two anecdotes will sufficiently show.

On one occasion, when by unforeseen circumstances he was detained at Sadlers Wells beyond the usual time, he and Mr. Fairbrother (the father of the well-known theatrical printer), who, like himself, was engaged at both theatres, and had agreed to accompany him that evening, started hand-in-hand from Sadlers Wells theatre, and ran to the stage-door of Drury Lane in eight minutes by the stop-watches which they carried. Grimaldi adds, that this was considered a great feat at the time; and we should think it was.

Another night, during the time when the Drury Lane company were playing at the Italian Opera-

house in the Haymarket in consequence of the old theatre being pulled down and a new one built, Mr. Fairbrother and himself, again put to their utmost speed by lack of time, ran from Sadlers Wells to the Opera-house in fourteen minutes, meeting with no other interruption by the way than one which occurred at the corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields, where they unfortunately ran against and overturned an infirm old lady, without having time enough to pick her up again. After Grimaldi's business at the Opera house was over, (he had merely to walk in the procession in Cymon,) he ran back alone to Sadlers Wells in thirteen minutes, and arrived just in time to dress for Clown in the concluding pantomime.

His attention to his duties, and invariable punctuality were always remarkable. To his possession in an eminent degree of these qualities, may be attributed the fact, that during the whole of his dramatic career, long and arduous as it was, he never once disappointed the public, or failed in his attendance at the theatre to perform any part for which he was cast.

He continued to attend his duties as a member of the Drury Lane company for three months

without finding that any violent consequences arose from his interview with John Kemble. The only perceptible difference was, that when they met, Kemble, instead of accosting him familiarly, as he had before been accustomed to do, would pull off his hat and make him a formal bow, which Grimaldi would return in precisely the same manner; so that their occasional meetings were characterised by something about half-way between politeness and absurdity. All this pleased Grimaldi very much, but rather surprised him too, for he had confidently expected that some rupture would have followed the announcement of his determination not to act. He was not very long, however, in finding that his original apprehensions were correct, for on the 26th of June he received the following epistle.

"Drury Lane Theatre.

"SIR,

"I am requested by the proprietors to inform you that your services will be dispensed with for the next ensuing season."

This notice was signed by Powell, the then

prompter, and its contents considerably annoyed and irritated the person to whom it was addressed. To command him in the first place to perform what was out of his engagement and out of his power, and to punish him in the next by dispensing with his services, which of consequence involved his dispensing with his salary, seemed exceedingly harsh and unjust treatment. For a time he even contemplated bringing an action against Sheridan, against whom, under the terms of his agreement, he would in all probability have obtained a verdict; but he ultimately gave up all idea of seeking this mode of redress, and determined to consult his staunch and sincere friend Mr. Hughes, by whose advice he was always guided. To that gentleman's house he repaired, and showing him the notice he had received, inquired what in his opinion he had best do.

"Burn the letter," said Hughes, "and don't waste a minute in thinking about it. You shall go with me to Exeter as soon as the Sadlers Wells season is over, and stop there until it recommences. You hall have four pounds a week all the time, and a clear benefit. It will be strange if this does

not turn out better for you than your present engagement at Drury Lane."

He accepted the terms so kindly offered, without a moment's hesitation, and determining to be guided by the advice of Mr. Hughes, thought no more about the matter.

At Sadlers Wells the summer season went on very briskly until August, when a circumstance occurred which impeded the course of his success for some time, and might have been attended with much more dangerous consequences. He played the first lieutenant of a band of robbers in the beforementioned Great Devil, and in one scene had a pistol secreted in his boot, which, at a certain point of interest, he drew forth, presented at some of the characters on the stage, and fired off, thus producing what is technically termed an effect; in the production of which on the evening of the 14th of August, he very unintentionally presented another effect, the consequences of which confined him to his bed for upwards of a month. While he was in the act of drawing out the pistol, the trigger by some accident caught in the loop of the boot, into which (the muzzle being downwards)

its contents were immediately discharged. The boot itself puffed out to a great size, presenting a very laughter-moving appearance to everybody but the individual in it, who was suffering the most excruciating agony. Determined not to mar the effect of the scene, however, by leaving the stage before it was finished, he remained on until its conclusion; and then, when by the assistance of several persons the boot was got off, it was found that the explosion had set fire to the stocking, which had been burning slowly all the time he had remained upon the stage; besides which, the wadding was still alight and resting upon the foot. He was taken home and placed under medical care; but the accident confined him to the house for more than a month.

During this illness he received great attention and kindness from Miss Bristow, one of the actresses at Drury Lane Theatre. She attended upon him every morning to assist in dressing the wound, and enlivened the hours, which would otherwise have been very weary, by her company and conversation. In gratitude for her kindness, Grimaldi married her on the following Christmas Eve · and it may be as well to state in this place,

that with her he lived very happily for more than thirty years; when she died.

At length, after a tedious, and, as it appeared to him *then*, almost an interminable confinement, he resumed his duties at Sadlers Wells Theatre, and the part also. But the effect was never more produced; for from that time forth the pistol was worn in his belt, in compliance with the established usage of robber chieftains upon the stage, who, at minor theatres especially, would be quite incomplete and out of character without a very broad black belt, with a huge buckle, and at least two brace of pistols stuck into it.

Drury Lane opened on the 30th of September, with "As You Like It," and "Blue Beard." Grimaldi's chief part in this piece was a combat in the last scene but one; which, being very effective, had always been regularly and vociferously applauded. It was not originally in the piece, but had been "invented" and arranged with appropriate music for the purpose of keeping the attention of the house engaged while the last scene, which was a very heavy one, was being "set up." Now, if any fresh combatant had been ready in Grimaldi's place, very probably the piece might

have gone off as well as it had theretofore done; but Kemble, who was then stage-manager, as has been before stated, totally forgetting the reason of the combat's introduction, omitted to provide any substitute. The omission was pointed out at rehearsal, and then he gave directions that it should be altogether dispensed with.

The effect of this order was very unsatisfactory both to himself and the public.

There was a very full house at night, and the play went off as well as it could, and so did the afterpiece up to the time when the last scene should have been displayed; but here the stage-manager discovered his mistake too late. The last scene was not ready, it being quite impossible to prepare it in time; and the consequence was, that the audience, instead of looking at the combat, were left to look at each other, or at the empty stage as they thought fit. Upon this, there gradually arose many hisses and other expressions of disapprobation, and at last some play-goer in the pit, who all at once remembered the combat, shouted out very loudly for it. The cry was instantly taken up and became universal: some demanded the combat, others required an apology for the

omission of the combat, a few called upon Kemble to fight the combat himself, and a scene of great commotion ensued. The exhibition of the last scene, instead of allaying the tumult, only increased it, and when the curtain fell it was in the midst of a storm of hisses and disapprobation.

It so happened that Sheridan had been sitting in his own private box with a party of friends all the evening, frequently congratulating himself on the crowded state of the house, and repeatedly expatiating upon the admirable manner in which both pieces went off. He was consequently not a little annoyed at the sudden change in the temper of the audience; and not only that, but, as he knew nothing at all about the unlucky combat, very much confounded and amazed into the bargain. The moment the curtain was down, he rushed on to the stage, where the characters had formed a picture, and in a loud and alarming voice exclaimed,

"Let no one stir!"

Nobody did stir; and Sheridan, walking to the middle of the proscenium, and standing with his back to the curtain, said in his most solemn manner,

"In this affair I am determined to be satisfied, and I call upon somebody here to answer me one question. What is the cause of this infernal clamour?"

This question was put in such an all-important way, that no one ventured to reply until some seconds had elapsed, when Barrymore, who played Blue Beard, stepped forward and said, that the fact, was, there had formerly been a combat between Mr. Roffey and Joe, and the audience were dissatisfied at its not being done.

"And why was it not done, sir? Why was it not done? Where is Joe, sir?"

"Really, sir," replied Barrymore, "it is impossible for me to say where he may be. Our old friend Joe was dismissed at the close of the last season by the stage-manager."

At this speech Sheridan fell into a great rage, said a great many angry things, and made a great many profoundly important statements, to the effect that he would be master of his own house, and that nobody should manage for him, and so forth; all of which was said in a manner more or less polite. He concluded by directing the call

porter of the theatre to go immediately to "Joe's" house,.and to request him to be upon the stage at twelve precisely next day. He then took off his hat with a great flourish, made a polite bow to the actors and actresses on the stage, and walked very solemnly away.

He received Grimaldi very kindly next day, and reinstated him in the situation he had previously held, adding unasked a pound a week to his former salary, "in order," as he expressed himself, "that matters might be arranged in a manner profoundly satisfactory."

On the day after, Harlequin Amulet flourished in the bills in large letters for the following Monday; a rehearsal was called, and during its progress Kemble took an opportunity of encountering Grimaldi, and said with great good humour that he was very glad to see him there again, and that he hoped it would be very long before they parted company. In this expression of feeling Grimaldi very heartily concurred; and so ended his discharge from Drury Lane Theatre, entailing upon him no more unpleasant consequences than the easily-borne infliction of an increased salary.

So ended also, the Exeter scheme, which was at once abandoned by Mr. Hughes, whose only object had been to serve his son-in-law.

"About this time," says Grimaldi, "I used frequently to see the late Mr. M. G. Lewis, commonly called Monk Lewis, on account of his being the author of a well-known novel, better known from its dramatic power than from its strait-laced propriety or morality of purpose. He was an effeminate-looking man, almost constantly lounging about the green-room of Drury Lane, and entering into conversation with the ladies and gentlemen, but in a manner so peculiar, so namby-pamby (I cannot think at this moment of a more appropriate term), that it was far from pleasing a majority of those thus addressed. His writings prove him to have been a clever man; a consummation which his conversation would most certainly have failed signally in producing. I have often thought that Sheridan used to laugh in his sleeve at this gentleman; and I have, indeed, very good reason for believing that Lewis upon many more occasions than one was the undisguised butt of our manager. Be that as it may, Monk Lewis's play of

the Castle Spectre was most undoubtedly a great card for Drury Lane; it drew immense houses, and almost invariably went off with loud applause. I have heard the following anecdote related, which if true, clearly proves that Sheridan by no means thought so highly of this drama as did the public at large. One evening it chanced that these two companions were sitting at some tavern in the neighbourhood discussing the merits of a disputed question and a divided bottle, when Lewis, warming with his subject, offered to back his opinion with a bet.

"'What will you wager?' inquired Sheridan, who began to doubt whether his was not the wrong side of the argument.

"'I 'll bet you one night's receipts of the Castle Spectre!' exclaimed the author.

"'No,' replied the manager; 'that would be too heavy a wager for so trifling a matter. I 'll tell you what I 'll do,—I 'll bet you its intrinsic worth as a literary production!'

"Lewis received these little sallies from his lively acquaintance with the most perfect equanimity of temper, never manifesting annoyance by

action further than by passing his hand through his light-coloured hair, or by word further than a murmured interjection of 'Hum!' or 'Hah!'"

There is another little anecdote in this place which we will also leave Grimaldi to tell in his own way.

"In the winter of the year I frequently had the honour of seeing his late majesty George the Fourth, then Prince of Wales, who used to be much behind the scenes of Drury Lane, delighting everybody with his affability, his gentlemanly manners, and his witty remarks. On Twelfth Night 1802, we all assembled in the green-room as usual on that anniversary at Drury Lane Theatre, to eat cake, given by the late Mr. Baddeley, who by his will left three guineas to be spent in the purchase of a Twelfth cake for the company of that theatre. In the midst of our merriment, Sheridan, accompanied by the Prince, entered the apartment, and the former looking at the cake and noticing a large crown with which it was surmounted, playfully said, 'It is not right that a crown should be the property of a *cake:* what say you, George?' The Prince merely

laughed; and Sheridan, taking up the crown, offered it to him, adding,

"'Will you deign to accept this trifle?'

"'Not so,' replied his highness: 'however it may be doubted, it is nevertheless true that I prefer the cake to the crown, after all.' And so, declining the crown, he partook of our feast with hilarity and condescension."

There was no pantomime at Drury Lane either in 1801 or 1802; nor was any great novelty produced at Sadlers Wells in the latter year. The year 1802, indeed, seems to have been productive of no melodramatic wonder whatever; the most important circumstance it brought to Grimaldi being the birth of a son on the 21st of November; an event which afforded him much joy and happiness.

But if 1802 brought nothing remarkable with it, its successor did, for it was ushered in with an occurrence of a rather serious nature, the consequences of which were not very soon recovered. Whether it was ill-fortune or want of caution, or want of knowledge of worldly matters, it did so happen that whenever Grimaldi succeeded in scraping together a little money, so surely did he

lose it afterwards in some strange and unforeseen manner. He had at that period been for some time acquainted with a very respected merchant of the city of London, named Charles Newland, (not Abraham,) who was supposed to have an immense capital embarked in business, who lived in very good style, keeping up a great appearance, and who was considered to be, in short, a very rich man. He called at Grimaldi's house one morning in February, and requesting a few minutes' private conversation, said hastily,

"I dare say you will be surprised, Joe, when you hear what business I have come upon; but,—but,—although I am possessed of a great deal of wealth, it is all embarked in business, and I am at this moment very short of ready money; so I want you to lend me a few hundred pounds, if it is quite convenient." All this was said with a brisk and careless air, as if such slight trifles as "a few hundred pounds" were scarcely deserving of being named.

Grimaldi had never touched the five hundred and odd pounds which he had picked up on Tower Hill, but had added enough to make six hundred in all. This sum he hastened to place before his

friend, assuring him, with great sincerity, that if he had possessed double or treble the amount, he would have been happy to have lent it him with the greatest readiness. The merchant expressed the gratification he derived from his friendship, and giving him a bill for the money at three months' date, shook his hand warmly and left him.

The bill was dishonoured; the merchant became bankrupt, left England for America, and died upon the passage out. And thus the contents of the net purse and the bundle of notes were lost as easily as they were gained, with the addition of some small savings besides.

CHAPTER IX.

1803.

Containing a very extraordinary incident well worthy of the reader's attention.

One evening in the second week of November 1803, Grimaldi, then playing at Drury Lane, had been called by the prompter, and was passing from the green-room to the stage, when a messenger informed him that two gentlemen were waiting to see him at the stage-door. Afraid of keeping the stage waiting, he enjoined the messenger to tell the gentlemen that he was engaged at that moment, but that he would come down to them directly he left the stage. The play was "A Bold Stroke for a Wife:" Miss Mellon was Anne, Bannister Feingwell, Aitkin Simon Pure, and Grimaldi Aminadab.

As soon as he could get away from the stage, he hurried down stairs, and inquiring who wanted

him, was introduced to two strangers, who were patiently awaiting his arrival. They were young men of gentlemanly appearance, and upon hearing the words "Here's Mr. Grimaldi — who wants him?" one of them turned hastily round and warmly accosted him.

He looked about his own age, and had evidently been accustomed to a much warmer climate than that of England. He wore the fashionable evening-dress of the day, — that is to say, a blue body-coat with gilt buttons, a white waistcoat, and tight pantaloons, — and carried in his hand a small gold-headed cane.

"Joe, my lad!" exclaimed this person, holding out his hand in some agitation, "how goes it with you now, old fellow?"

He was not a little surprised at this familiar address from a person whom he was not conscious of ever having seen in his life, and, after a moment's pause, replied that he really had not the pleasure of the stranger's acquaintance.

"Not the pleasure of my acquaintance!" repeated the stranger, with a loud laugh. "Well, Joe, that seems funny, anyhow!" He appealed to his companion, who concurred in the opinion, and

they both laughed heartily. This was all very funny to the strangers, but not at all so to Grimaldi: he had a vague idea that they were rather laughing at than with him, and, as much offended as surprised, was turning away, when the person who had spoken first said in rather a tremulous voice,

"Joe, don't you know me now?"

He turned and gazed at him again. He had opened his shirt, and was pointing to a scar upon his breast, the sight of which at once assured him that it was no other than his brother who stood before him,—his only brother, who had disappeared under the circumstances narrated in an earlier part of these memoirs.

They were naturally much affected by this meeting, especially the elder brother, who had been so suddenly summoned into the presence of the near relative whom long ago he had given up for lost. They embraced again and again, and gave vent to their feelings in tears.

"Come up stairs," said Grimaldi, as soon as the first surprise was over; "Mr. Wroughton is there—Mr. Wroughton, who was the means of your going to sea,—he'll be delighted to see you."

The brothers were hurrying away, when the friend, whose presence they had quite forgotten in their emotion, said,

"Well, John, then I 'll wish you good night!"

"Good night! good night!" said the other, shaking his hand; "I shall see you in the morning."

"Yes," replied the friend; "at ten, mind!"

"At ten precisely: I shall not forget," answered John.

The friend, to whom he had not introduced his brother in any way, departed; and they went upon the stage together, where Grimaldi introduced his brother to Powell, Bannister, Wroughton, and many others in the green-room, who, attracted by the singularity of his return under such circumstances, had collected round them.

Having his stage business to attend to, he had very little time for conversation; but of course he availed himself of every moment that he could spare off the stage, and in answer to his inquiries, his brother assured him that his trip had been eminently successful.

"At this moment," he said, slapping his breast-pocket, "I have six hundred pounds here."

"Why, John," said his brother, "it's very dangerous to carry so much money about with you!"

"Dangerous!" replied John, smiling; "we sailors know nothing about danger. But, my lad, even if all this were gone, I should not be penniless." And he gave a knowing wink, which induced his brother to believe that he had indeed "made a good trip of it."

At this moment Grimaldi was again called upon the stage; and Mr. Wroughton, taking that opportunity of talking to his brother, made many kind inquiries of him relative to his success and the state of his finances. In reply to these questions he made in effect the same statements as he had already communicated to Joseph, and exhibited as evidence of the truth of his declarations a coarse canvass bag, stuffed full of various coins, which he carefully replaced in his pocket again.

As soon as the comedy was ended, Grimaldi joined him; and Mr. Wroughton, having congratulated his brother on his return, and the fortunate issue of his adventures, bade them good

night; when Grimaldi took occasion to ask how long the sailor had been in town.

He replied, two or three hours back; that he had merely tarried to get some dinner, and had come straight to the theatre. In answer to inquiries relative to what he intended doing, he said he had not bestowed a thought upon the matter, and that the only topic which had occupied his mind was his anxiety to see his mother and brother. A long and affectionate conversation ensued, in the course of which it was proposed by Joseph, that as his mother lived with himself and wife, and they had a larger house than they required, the brother should join them, and they should all live together. To this the brother most gladly and joyfully assented, and adding that he must see his mother that night, or his anxiety would not suffer him to sleep, asked where she lived.

Grimaldi gave him the address directly; but, as he did not play in the afterpiece, said, that he had done for the night, and that if he would wait while he changed his dress, he would go with him. His brother was, of course, glad to hear

there was no necessity for them to separate, and Grimaldi hurried away to his dressing-room, leaving him on the stage.

The agitation of his feelings, the suddenness of his brother's return, the good fortune which had attended him in his absence, the gentility of his appearance, and his possession of so much money, all together confused him so, that he could scarcely use his hands. He stood still every now and then quite lost in wonder, and then suddenly recollecting that his brother was waiting, looked over the room again and again for articles of dress that were lying before him. At length, after having occupied a much longer time than usual in changing his dress, he was ready and ran down to the stage. On his way he met Powell, who heartily congratulated him on the return of his relative, making about the thirtieth who had been kind enough to do so already. Grimaldi asked him, more from nervousness than for information, if he had seen him lately.

"Not a minute ago," was the reply; "he is waiting for you upon the stage. I won't detain you, for he complains that you have been longer away now, than you said you would be."

Grimaldi hurried down stairs to the spot where he had left his brother. He was not there.

"Who are you looking for, Joe?" inquired Bannister, as he saw him looking eagerly about.

"For my brother," he answered. "I left him here a little while back."

"Well, and I saw and spoke to him not a minute ago," said Bannister. "When he left me, he went in that direction" (pointing towards the passage that led to the stage-door). "I should think he had left the theatre."

Grimaldi ran to the stage-door, and asked the porter if his brother had passed. The man said he had, not a minute back; he could not have got out of the street by that time.

He ran out at the door, and then up and down the street several times, but saw nothing of him. Where could he be gone to? Possibly, finding him longer gone than he had anticipated, he might have stepped out to call upon one of his old friends close by whom he had not seen for so many years, with the intention of returning to the theatre. This was not unlikely; for in the immediate neighbourhood there lived a Mr. Bowley, who had been his bosom friend when they

were boys. The idea no sooner struck Grimaldi than he ran to the house and knocked hastily at the door. The man himself answered the knock, and was evidently greatly surprised.

"I have indeed seen your brother," he said, in reply to Grimaldi's question. "Good God! I was never so amazed in all my life."

"Is he here now?" was the anxious inquiry.

"No: but he has not been gone a minute; he cannot have gone many yards."

"Which way?"

"That way,—towards Duke Street."

"He must have gone," thought Grimaldi, "to call on Mr. Bailey, our old landlord." He hurried away to the house in Little Wild Street, and knocked long and loudly at the door. The people were asleep. He knocked again and rang violently, being in a state of great excitement; at length a servant-girl thrust her head out of an upper window, and said, both sulkily and sleepily,—

"I tell you, again, he is not at home."

"What are you talking about? Who is not at home?"

"Why, Mr. Bailey: I told you so before. What do you keep on knocking for, at this time of night?"

He could not understand a word of all this, but hurriedly told his name, and requested the girl to come down directly, for he wished to speak to her. The head was directly withdrawn, the window closed, and in a minute or two afterwards the girl appeared at the street-door.

"I 'm sure I beg your pardon, sir," she said, after pouring forth a volume of apologies. "But there was a gentleman here knocking and ringing very violently not a minute before you came I told him Mr. Bailey was not at home; and when I heard you at the door, I thought it was him, and that he would not go away."

Grimaldi was breathless with the speed he had made, and trembling with vague apprehensions of he knew not what. He asked if she had seen the gentleman's face. The girl, surprised at his emotion, replied that she had not; she had only answered him from the window, being afraid to open the door to a stranger so long after dark when all the family were out. The only thing she had noticed was that he had got a white waistcoat on; for she had thought at the time, seeing him dressed, that perhaps he might have called to take her master to a party.

He must have gone back to the theatre.

He left the surprised girl standing at the door, and ran to Drury Lane. Here again he was disappointed; he had not been seen. He ran from place to place, and from house to house, wherever he thought it possible that his brother could have called, but nobody had heard of or seen him. Many of the persons to whom he appealed openly expressed their doubts to each other of his sanity of mind; which were really not without a shadow of probability, seeing that he knocked them out of their beds, and, with every appearance of agitation and wildness, demanded if they had seen his brother, whom nobody had heard of for fourteen years, and whom most of them considered dead.

It was so late now, that the theatre was just shutting up; but he ran back once more, and again inquired if his brother had been there. Hearing he had not, he concluded that, recollecting the address he had mentioned, he had gone straight to his mother's home. This seemed probable; and yet he felt a degree of dismay and alarm which he had never before experienced, even when there were good grounds for such feelings.

The more he thought of this, however, the more probable it seemed, and he blamed himself as he walked quickly homewards for not having thought of it sooner. He remembered the anxiety his brother had expressed to see their mother, the plan they had discussed for their all living together, and the many little schemes of future happiness which they had talked over in their hurried interview, and in all of which she was comprised. He reached home, and, composing himself as well as he could, entered the little room in which they usually supped after the play. His brother was not there, but his mother was, and, as she looked much paler than usual, he thought she had seen him.

"Well, mother," he said, "has anything strange occurred here to-night?"

"No: nothing that I have heard of."

"What! no stranger arrived!—no long-lost relative recovered!" exclaimed Grimaldi, all his former apprehensions returning.

"What do you mean?"

"Mean! Why, that John is come home safe and well, and with money enough to make all our fortunes."

His mother screamed wildly at this intelligence

and fainted: she recovered after a time, and Grimaldi recounted to her and his wife the events of the evening, precisely as they are here narrated.

They were greatly amazed at the recital. The mother held that he would be sure to come before the night was over; that he had probably met with some of his old friends, and would be there after he had left them. She insisted that Grimaldi, who was tired, should go to bed, while she sat up and waited for her son. He did so, and the mother remained all through the long night anxiously expecting his arrival.

This may appear a long story, but its conclusion invests it with a degree of interest which warrants the detail. The running away to sea of a young man, and his return after a lapse of years, is, and ever has been, no novelty in this island. This is not the burden of the tale. It possessed an awful interest to those whom it immediately concerned, and cannot fail to have some for the most indifferent reader.

From that night in November 1803, to this month of January 1838 the missing man was never seen again; nor was any intelligence or any

clue of the faintest or most remote description ever obtained by his friends respecting him.

Next morning, and many mornings afterwards, the mother still anxiously and hopelessly expected the arrival of her son. Again and again did she question Grimaldi about him—his appearance, his manner, what he said, and all the details of his disappearance; again and again was every minute fact recalled, and every possible conjecture hazarded relative to his fate. He could scarcely persuade himself but that the events of the preceding night were a delusion of his brain, until the inquiries after his brother which were made by those who had seen him on the previous night placed them beyond all doubt. He communicated to his friends the strange history of the last few hours, with all the circumstances of his brother's sudden appearance, and of his equally sudden disappearance. He was advised to wait a little while before he made the circumstances public, in the hope that he might have been induced to spend the night with some shipmates, and might speedily return.

But a week passed away, and then further silence would have been criminal, and he proceeded to set

on foot every inquiry which his own mind could suggest, or the kindness of his friends prompted them to advise. A powerful nobleman who at that time used to frequent Drury Lane Theatre, and who had on many occasions expressed his favourable opinion of Grimaldi, interested himself greatly in the matter, and set on foot a series of inquiries at the Admiralty: every source of information possessed by that establishment that was deemed at all likely to throw any light upon the subject was resorted to, but in vain; the newspapers were searched to ascertain what ships had arrived in the river or upon the coast that day—whence they came, what crews they carried, what passengers they had; the police-officers were paid to search all London through, and endeavour to gain some information, if it were only of the lost man's death. Everything was tried by the family, and by many very powerful friends whom the distressing nature of the inquiry raised up about them, to trace the object of their regret and labour, but all in vain. The sailor was seen no more.

Various surmises were afloat at the time regarding the real nature of this mysterious trans-

action: many of them, of course, were absurd enough, but the two most probable conjectures appear to have been hazarded many years afterwards, and when all chance of the man being alive were apparently at an end,—the one by the noble lord who had pursued the investigation at the Admiralty, and the other by a shrewd long-headed police-officer, who had been employed to set various inquiries on foot in the neighbourhood of the theatre.

The former suggested that a press-gang, to whom the person of the brother was known, might possibly have pounced upon him in some bye-street and have carried him off; in which case, as he had previously assumed a false name, the fact of his friends' receiving no intelligence of him was easily accounted for; while, as nothing could be more probable than that he was slain in one of the naval engagements so rife about that time, his never appearing again was easily explained. This solution of the mystery, however, was by no means satisfactory to his friends, as it was liable to many very obvious doubts and objections. Upon the whole, they felt inclined to give far more credence to the still more tragical, but, it is to be

feared, more probable explanation which the experience of the police-officer suggested.

This man was of opinion that the unfortunate subject of their doubts had been lured into some low infamous den, by persons who had either previously known or suspected that he had a large sum of money in his possession; that here he was plundered, and afterwards either murdered in cold blood, or slain in some desperate struggle to recover his gold. This conjecture was encouraged by but too many corroboratory circumstances: the sailor was of a temper easily persuaded; he had all the recklessness and hardihood of a seafaring man, only increased by the possession of prize-money and the release from hard work: he had money, and a very large sum of money, about him, the greater part in specie, and not in notes, or any security which it would be difficult or dangerous to exchange; all this was known to his brother and to Mr. Wroughton, both eye-witnesses of the fact.

One other circumstance deserves a word. It was, both at the time and for a long period afterwards, a source of bitter although of most groundless self-reproach to Grimaldi, that he

could not sufficiently recollect the appearance of the man who accompanied his brother to the stage-door of the theatre, to describe his person. If he could have been traced out, some intelligence respecting the poor fellow might perhaps have been discovered; but Grimaldi was so much moved by the unexpected recognition of his brother, that he scarcely bestowed a thought or a look upon his companion: nor, after taxing his memory for many years, could he ever recollect more than that he was dressed in precisely the same attire as his brother, even down to the white waistcoat; a circumstance which had not only been noticed by himself, but was well remembered by the door-keeper, and others who had passed in and out of the theatre during the time the two young men were standing in the lobby.

Recollecting the intimate terms upon which the two appeared to be, and the appointment which was made between them for the following morning, "at ten precisely," there is little reason to doubt that if the sailor had disappeared without the knowledge or privity of his companion, the latter would infallibly have applied to Grimaldi to know where his brother was. Coupling the fact

of his never doing so, and never being seen or heard of again, with the circumstance of the lost man never having evinced the least inclination to take him home with him, to retain him when he was in his brother's company, or even to introduce him in the slightest manner, (from all of which it would seem that he was some bad or doubtful character,) the family arrived at the conclusion,—if it should ever prove an unjust one, it will be forgiven,—that this man was cognizant of, if indeed he was not chiefly instrumental in bringing about, the untimely fate of the murdered man, for such they always supposed him. Whether they were right or wrong in this conclusion, will probably ever remain unknown.

CHAPTER X.

1803 to 1805.

Bologna and his Family.—An Excursion into Kent with that personage.—Mr. Mackintosh, the gentleman of landed property, and his preserves.—A great day's sporting; and a scene at the Garrick's Head in Bow Street between a Landlord, a Gamekeeper, Bologna, and Grimaldi.

Signore Bologna, better known to his intimates by the less euphonious title of Jack Bologna, was a countryman of Grimaldi's father, having been, like him, born at Genoa; he had been well acquainted with him, indeed, previously to his coming to England. He arrived in this country, with his wife, two sons, and a daughter, in 1787. The signore was a posture-master, and his wife a slack-wire dancer; John his eldest son (afterwards the well-known Harlequin), Louis his second son, and Barbara the youngest child, were all dancers. They were first engaged at Sadlers Wells, and here an intimacy

commenced between Bologna and Grimaldi which lasted during the remainder of their lives; they were children when it commenced, playing about the street in the morning, and at the theatre at night.

The signore and his family remained at Sadlers Wells until 1793, when Mr. Harris engaged him and his children (his wife had died before this time) at Covent Garden, where they remained for several years; Bologna playing during the summer months at the Surrey Circus, as Grimaldi used to act at Sadlers Wells. In 1801 he left Covent Garden, and in 1803 the Circus; upon the conclusion of the latter engagement, he was immediately secured for the ensuing season at Sadlers Wells, where he reappeared on Easter Monday in 1804. During the many years which had passed away since he closed his first engagement at Sadlers Wells, he and Grimaldi had been necessarily prevented by their different occupations from seeing much of each other; but being now once more engaged at the same theatre, their old intimacy was renewed. Their wives becoming attached to each other, and their engagements being pretty much the same, they were constantly

at each other's houses or in each other's society. They met with a droll adventure in company which may as well be related in this place.

Drury Lane closed in June and reopened on the 4th of October; but, as usual, Grimaldi's services were not required until Christmas. He had been in great request at Sadlers Wells; for the season was one of the heaviest the performers had ever known. The two friends were speaking of this one evening and complaining of their great fatigue, when Bologna recalled to mind that he had a friend residing in Kent who had repeatedly invited him down to his house for a few days' shooting, and to take a friend with him: he proposed therefore that he and Grimaldi should go down by way of relaxation. On the 6th of November, accordingly, the friend having been previously apprised of their intention and having again returned a most pressing invitation, they left town in a gig hired for the purpose.

On the road, Bologna told his friend that the gentleman whom they were going down to visit was an individual of the name of Mackintosh; that he was understood to be wholly unconnected with any business or profession, that he was a large

landed proprietor, and that he had most splendid preserves. The intelligence pleased Grimaldi very much, as he looked forward to a very stylish visit, and felt quite elated with the idea of cultivating the acquaintance of so great a man.

"I have never seen his place myself," said Bologna; "but when he is in London, he is always about the theatres, and he has often asked me to come down and have some shooting."

They were talking thus, when they arrived at Bromley, which was about two miles and a half from the place to which they were bound. Here they met a man in a fustian jacket, driving a tax-cart drawn by a very lame little horse, who suddenly pulling up, hailed the party with a loud "Hallo!" and a "Well, Joe, here you are!"

Grimaldi was rather surprised at this intimate salutation from a stranger; and he was a little more so when Bologna, after shaking hands very heartily with the man in fustian, introduced him as the identical Mr. Mackintosh whom they were going down to visit.

"I 'm glad to see you, Joe," said Mr. Mackintosh with an air of patronage. "I thought I 'd meet you here and show you the way."

Grimaldi made some suitable acknowledgments for this politeness, and the tax-cart and the gig went on together.

"I am sorry to say you have hit upon a bad day for coming down here, so far as the shooting goes," said Mackintosh, "for to-morrow is a general fast. At any rate, you can walk about and look at the country; and the next day—the next day—won't we astonish the natives!"

"Are there plenty of birds this year?" inquired Bologna.

"Lots — lots," replied the other man, whose manner and appearance scarcely bore out Grimaldi's preconceived notion of the gentleman they were going to visit. If he were already surprised, however, he had much greater cause to be so eventually.

After travelling upwards of two miles, Bologna inquired if they were not near their place of destination.

"Certainly," answered Mackintosh: "that is my house."

Looking in the direction pointed out, their eyes were greeted with the appearance of a small roadside public-house, in front of which hung a sign-

board, bearing the words "Good entertainment for man and beast" painted on it, and beneath the name of "Mackintosh." Bologna looked at Grimaldi, and then at the public-house, and then at the man in the fustian jacket; but he was far too much engaged in contemplating with evident satisfaction the diminutive dwelling they were approaching, to regard the surprise of his companions. "Yes," he said, "that house contains the best of wines, ales, beds, tobacco, stabling, skittle-grounds, and every other luxury."

"I beg your pardon," interposed Bologna, who was evidently mortified, while Grimaldi had a strong and almost irresistible inclination to laugh, "but I thought you were not connected with business at all?"

"No more I am," said Mackintosh with a wink: "the business belongs to mother!"

Bologna looked inexpressibly annoyed, and Grimaldi laughed outright, at which Mr. Mackintosh seemed rather pleased than otherwise, taking it to all appearance quite complimentary. "Yes," he said, "I may be said to be a gentleman at large, for I do nothing but ride about in my carriage here," pointing to the tax-cart, "or stroll

out with my gun or my fishing-rod. Mother's quite a woman of business; but as I'm an only child, I suppose I shall have to look after it myself some day or other."

He remained silent a moment, and then said, touching Bologna smartly with his whip, "I suppose, old fellow, you didn't think you were coming to a public-house,—eh?"

"Indeed I did not," was the sulky reply.

"Ah! I thought you'd be surprised," said Mackintosh with a hearty laugh. "I never let my London friends know who or what I am, except they're very particular friends, like you and Joe, for instance. I just lead them to guess I'm a great man, and there I leave 'em. What does it matter what other ideas strangers have about one?—But here we are, so get out of your gig; and rest assured you shall have as hearty a welcome as you'll ever get at a nobleman's house."

There was something hearty and pleasant in the man's manner, despite his coarseness; so, finding that Bologna was not inclined to speak, Grimaldi said something civil himself, which was extremely well received by their host, who shook his hand warmly, and led them into the house,

where, being introduced to Mrs. Mackintosh by her son as particular friends of his, they were received with great hospitality, and shortly afterwards sat down in the little bar to a capital plain dinner, which, in conjunction with some sparkling ale, rather tended to soothe the wounded spirit of Bologna.

After dinner they walked about the neighbourhood, which was all very pleasant, and returning to supper, were treated with great hospitality. On retiring to rest, Bologna acknowledged that "matters might have been worse," but, before pronouncing a final opinion prudently waited to ascertain how the preserves would turn out. On the following day, they divided their time pretty equally between eating, drinking, chatting with the chance customers of the house, their host and his mother, and, though last not least, preparing their guns for the havoc which they purposed making the next morning in the preserves of Mr. Mackintosh, of which preserves he still continued to speak in terms of the highest praise.

Accordingly, they met at the breakfast table a full hour earlier than on the previous day, and having despatched a hearty meal, sallied forth,

accompanied by Mr. Mackintosh, who declined carrying a gun, and contented himself with showing the way. Having walked some little distance, they came to a stile, which they climbed over, and after traversing a plot of pasture-land, arrived at a gate, beyond which was a field of fine buck-wheat. Here the guide called a halt.

"Wait a minute! — wait a minute!" cried he; "you are not so much accustomed to sporting as I."

They stopped. He advanced to the gate, looked over, and hastily returned.

"Now 's the time!" he said eagerly; "there 's lots of birds in that field!" They crept very cautiously onwards; but when they reached the gate and saw beyond it, were amazed to discern nothing but an immense quantity of pigeons feeding in the field.

"*There's* a covey!" said Mackintosh admiringly.

"A covey!" exclaimed Grimaldi. "Where? I see nothing but pigeons!"

"Nothing but pigeons!" exclaimed Mackintosh contemptuously. "What did you expect to find? Nothing but pigeons!—Well!"

"I expected to find pheasants and partridges," answered both sportsmen together. Bologna, upon whom the sulks were again beginning to fall, gave a grunt of disapprobation; but Mackintosh either was, or pretended to be, greatly surprised.

"Pheasants and partridges!" he exclaimed with a ludicrous expression of amazement. "Oh dear, quite out of the question! I invited you down here to shoot birds—and pigeons are birds; and there are the pigeons;—shoot away, if you like. I have performed my part of the agreement. Pheasants and partridges!" he repeated: "most extraordinary!"

"The fellow 's a humbug!" whispered Bologna: "kill as many of his pigeons as you can."

With this understanding, Bologna fired at random into the nearest cluster of pigeons, and Grimaldi fired upon them as they rose frightened from the ground. The slaughter was very great: they picked up twenty in that field, five in the one beyond, and saw besides several fall which they could not find. This great success, and the agreeable employment of picking up the birds, restored their equanimity of temper, and all went

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well for some time, until Mackintosh said inquiringly,

"I think you have them all now?"

"I suppose we have," replied Bologna: "at least, all except those which we saw fall among the trees yonder."

"Those you will not be able to get," said Mackintosh.

"Very good: such being the case, we have 'em all," returned Bologna.

"Very well," said Mackintosh quietly: "and now, if you will take my advice, you will cut away at once."

"Cut away!" said Bologna.

"Cut away!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

"Cut away is the word!" repeated Mr. Mackintosh.

"And why, pray?" asked Bologna.

"Why?" said Mr. Mackintosh. "Isn't the reason obvious? — Because you 've killed the pigeons."

"But what has our killing these pigeons to do with cutting away?"

"Bless us!" cried Mackintosh, "you are not very bright to-day! Don't you see that when the

squire comes to hear of it, he 'll be very angry. Now what can be plainer, if he 's very angry, as I know he will be, than that if you are here he 'll put you in prison? Don't you stand that. No, no; what I say is, cut away at once, and don't stop for him to catch you."

"Pooh!" said Bologna with a contemptuous air, "I see you know nothing of the law. There 's not a squire in all England who has power to put us in prison, merely because we have killed your pigeons, although we may not have taken out certificates."

"*My* pigeons!" exclaimed Mackintosh. "Lord help you! they 're none o' mine!—they belong to the squire, and very fond of them he is, and precious savage he 'll be when he finds out how you have been peppering them. So there I come back again to what I set out with. If you two lads will take my advice, now you 've got your pigeons, you 'll cut away with them."

The remarkable disclosure contained in this little speech fairly overwhelmed them; they stared at each other in stupid surprise, which shortly gave way first to anger, and then to fear. They were greatly awed at contemplating the risk which

they had incurred of being "sent to prison;" and after a few words of angry remonstrance addressed to Mr. Mackintosh, which that gentleman heard with a degree of composure and philosophy quite curious to behold, they concluded that they had better act upon his advice and "cut away" at once.

They lost no time in returning to the inn; and here, while they were engaged in packing up the "birds," the singular host got a nice luncheon ready, of which they did not fail to partake, and then mounting their gig, they bade farewell to him and his mother, the former of whom at parting appeared so much delighted, and vented so many knowing winks, that for very life they could not help laughing outright.

On the following morning, Bologna and Grimaldi encountered each other by chance in Covent Garden. Grimaldi had been to Drury Lane to see if he were wanted, and Bologna had been into the Strand, in which, during the winter months, when he was not engaged at any theatre, he had an exhibition. They laughed heartily at meeting, as the recollection of the day previous, and its adventures came upon them, and finally adjourned to

the Garrick's Head, in Bow Street, to have a glass of sherry and a biscuit, and once more talk the matter over. The house was then kept by a man of the name of Spencer, who had formerly been Harlequin at Drury Lane, but who, having left the profession, had turned Boniface instead. He was standing at the door when they arrived, and all three being upon intimate terms, was invited to join in a glass of wine: to this he readily assented, and they adjourned to his private room, where the Kentish adventures were related, to his great amusement and pleasure.

"By the bye, though," he said, when the merriment was pretty well over, "I wish you had happened to mention to me that you wanted a few days' shooting, for I could have procured that for you with the greatest ease. I was born at Hayes, and all my relatives live in Kent; besides, I know pretty well every gamekeeper in the county;—in fact, when in town, they invariably come to this house, and would have been delighted to have obliged any friend of mine."

"Ah!" said Bologna, "and in that case we should have had birds to shoot at, and not pigeons."

Here Mr. Spencer indulged in a laugh, which was interrupted by the entrance of a young man who, though unknown to Bologna and Grimaldi, appeared well acquainted with the landlord, who, after shaking him warmly by the hand and bidding him be seated, said, "But, Joseph, what has brought you so suddenly to town?"

"Oh, drat it!" exclaimed the new-comer, "a very disagreeable business indeed. There were two vagabonds down in our parts yesterday from London, and they killed and stole fifty or sixty of master's pigeons. I 've come up here to find them out and apprehend them: I 've got a constable drinking in the tap."

This information rather flustered them, and Bologna turned as pale as death; but the host, after indulging in two winks and one fit of reflection, quietly said,

"Well, but, Joseph, how can you find them out, think you? London 's a large place, Joseph."

"Why, I 'll tell you," replied the gamekeeper, for such, as they afterwards discovered, he was. "I found out, that the rascals had been staying at Mrs. Mackintosh's house, and were friends of her son; so I went to him last night and asked

him where the fellows were. 'Oh,' says he, 'I know what you've come about: they've cut away with them pigeons!' 'Yes,' says I; 'and unless you tell me where they've cut away to, I shall make you answerable.' 'Oh,' says he again, 'I know nothing about 'em; they're no friends of mine,' he says, 'they're only play-actors: one's a Clown and t'other's a Harlequin at one of the London theatres.' And this was all I could get from him; so up I came this morning, and knowing that you were acquainted with theatrical people, I thought I'd come and ask you which of the Clowns and which of the Harlequins it was most likely to be."

"Is the squire very angry?" asked Spencer.

"Oh, very," responded Joseph, with a shake of the head: "he's determined to pursue them to the very extremity of the law."

Upon hearing this, Grimaldi was much troubled in mind; not that he thought Spencer was a man likely to betray his friends, but fearing that by some inadvertence he might disclose what he felt certain his will would prompt him to conceal. As to Bologna, his agitation alone was sufficient to announce the real state of the fact; for, in

addition to a ghastly paleness which overspread his face, he trembled so much, that in an attempt to convey some wine to his lips, he deposited it upon his knees and left it there, staring all the while at the gamekeeper with a most crest-fallen visage.

"There 's one thing the squire appears to have forgotten," said Spencer, "and that is simply this — that before he can pursue these fellows to the extremity of the law, he has got to find them."

"True," answered Joseph; "and unless you assist me, I 'm afraid I shan't be able to do that. I suppose, now, there are a good many Clowns and Harlequins in London,—eh?"

"A great many," replied Spencer. "I am one, for instance."

"Oh!" smiled the gamekeeper, "but it isn't you."

"That 's true," said the host composedly. "But I 'll tell you what; it is two particular friends of mine, though, who did it!"

Joseph exclaimed, "Indeed!" and Bologna gave Grimaldi a look which clearly evidenced his conviction, firstly, that it was all up, and secondly, that it was impossible to "cut away."

"Friends of yours—hey?" said Joseph, ruminating. "Then I expect you won't assist me in finding them out?"

"Not a bit of it," answered Spencer, "so you may go and look among the Harlequins and Clowns yourself: and Heaven help you! for the jokes they will play and the tricks they will serve you will be enough to wear your heart out."

Joseph looked greatly mortified at this compassionate speech, and, after a moment's pause, stammered out something about "that being Mr. Spencer's friends, it made a great difference."

"I 'll tell you what it is, Joseph," said the landlord; "say no more about this affair, and my two friends will pay a reasonable sum for the pigeons, and stand a rump-steak dinner and a bottle of wine this very day. What say you?"

Joseph's countenance brightened up. "Oh!" said he, "as to the pigeons, of course I could manage. If the gentlemen are friends of yours, consider the matter settled,—I 'll talk the squire over about the matter. And as to the steak and wine, why I don't mind partaking of them; and, in return, they shall come down into Kent some day next week, and *I 'll* give them a morning's shooting."

"Then," said Spencer, rising formally, "these are the gentlemen. Gentlemen, this is Mr. Joseph Clarke."

All was satisfactorily settled: the rump-steak and wine were ordered, duly eaten and drunk, and they spent the afternoon together very jovially, accepting Mr. Clarke's invitation for another "day's shooting" with great alacrity;—nor did they omit keeping the appointment, but, on the day fixed, went once more into Kent, when, under the able guidance of their new acquaintance, they succeeded in killing and bagging four hares and five brace of pheasants in less than two hours.

They returned to town without seeing anything more of their friend Mr. Mackintosh, but being upon the very best terms with Mr. Joseph Clarke, who, but for his really keeping his word and giving them a day's sport, might be not unreasonably suspected of having been in league with the landlord to use the sportsmen for their joint amusement, and to extract a good dinner from them besides.

At Drury Lane no novelty was brought out until the holidays. John Kemble had left the theatre on the termination of the previous season

and had become a proprietor of the other house, by purchasing the share in the establishment which had previously belonged to Mr. W. Lewis. He became acting manager at once; Mr. Wroughton succeeding to his (Mr. Kemble's) old situation at Drury Lane.

In January 1805, they brought out at Drury a most miserable specimen of a pantomime called Harlequin's Fireside, which, contrary to the expectations of the company, ran till the following Easter, and was received, to their great amazement, with considerable applause. Mr. T. Dibdin, to whom Grimaldi expressed his surprise at its reception, admitted the poverty of the piece, and observed, that the abilities of the actors had alone occasioned its success. Grimaldi says it was very kind of him to say so, and thinks that perhaps it might be. It is by no means improbable, for similar results are not unfrequent now-a-days.

Sadlers Wells reopened, as usual, at Easter 1805: Grimaldi and Bologna were again engaged, and the season was a very profitable one. When "Harlequin's Fireside" had ceased running, he did not play at Drury above half a dozen times during the rest of the season. The theatre closed in

June, and reopened again on the 21st of September, the performances being Othello and Lodoiska, in which latter piece Grimaldi, his wife, and mother all appeared.

On the conclusion of the night's amusements, he had an interview with the acting manager, which, although at first both pleasing and profitable, led in less than six weeks to his departure from the theatre at which he had originally appeared, and in which he had constantly played, with all possible success, for nearly four-and-twenty years.

CHAPTER XI.

1805 to 1806.

Stage Affairs and Stage Quarrels.—Mr. Graham, the Bow Street Magistrate and Drury Lane Manager.—Mr. Peake.—Grimaldi is introduced to Mr. Harris by John Kemble,—leaves Drury Lane Theatre and Engages at Covent Garden.—Mortification of the authorities at "the other House."—He joins Charles Dibdin's Company and visits Dublin.—The *wet* Theatre.—Ill success of the speculation, and great success of his own Benefit.—Observations on the comparative strength of Whisky Punch and Rum Punch, with interesting experiments.

The manager of Drury Lane had advertised Tobin's comedy of "The Honey Moon" as the play for the second night of the season; not recollecting, until it was too late to alter the bills, that in consequence of the secession of Mr. Byrne, who had been ballet-master, and the non-engagement of any other person in his place, there was no one to arrange the dance incidental to the piece. In this dilemma, Grimaldi, who had been accustomed to arrange the dances at Sadlers Wells, was sent for, and, as soon as Lodoiska was

over, the interview took place between him and the manager to which reference was made at the close of the last chapter.

Mr. Wroughton, after stating that he was in a very unexpected dilemma, and that unless Grimaldi would assist him he would have to change the piece for the ensuing night,—which it was exceedingly desirable to avoid doing, if possible,—briefly narrated the circumstances in which the theatre was placed, and concluded by offering him two pounds per week in addition to his regular salary, if he would arrange the dance in question, and assist in getting up any other little dances and processions that might be required. This offer he readily accepted, merely stipulating that the increased salary should be understood to extend over the whole season, and not merely until another ballet-master was engaged. Mr. Wroughton observed, that nothing could be fairer, that this was what he meant, and that Grimaldi had his instructions to engage as many male dancers as he might deem necessary. He at once entered upon his new office, immediately engaged as many hands (or legs) as he required, arranged the dance during the night, called a rehearsal of it at ten in the

morning, got it into a perfect state by twelve, rehearsed it again in its proper place in the comedy, and at night had the satisfaction of hearing it encored with great applause.

At the end of the week, he received his increased salary from Mr. Peake, the treasurer, a gentleman well known and highly respected by all connected with the stage or theatrical literature, who shook him by the hand, congratulated him on this new improvement of his income, and cordially wished him success.

Before he accepted the money, he said, "My dear sir, to prevent any future difference, it is thoroughly understood, is it, that this increase is for the season?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr. Peake: "I will show you, if you like, Mr. Graham's written order to me to that effect." This he did, and Grimaldi of course was perfectly satisfied. Mr. Graham, who was then a magistrate at Bow Street, was at the head of affairs at Drury Lane.

All went on well for some little time. Mr. James D'Egville was engaged as ballet-master shortly afterwards; but this made no alteration in the footing upon which Grimaldi was placed. There was no difference of opinion between the ballet-

master and himself, for he continued to arrange the minor dances and processions, and his arrangements were repeatedly very warmly commended by Mr. D'Egville.

A new grand ballet, called Terpsichore, was produced by the latter gentleman immediately after his joining the company, in which Grimaldi performed "Pan," which he always considered a capital character and one of the best he ever had to play. The ballet was got up to bring forward Madame Parisot, who was engaged for the season, for one thousand guineas. It was thoroughly rehearsed, at least fourteen times before the night of performance: was very favorably received, and had a good run.

He was not a little surprised, on Saturday the 26th of October, when he went as usual to the treasury to draw his salary, to hear that thenceforth the extra two pounds would not be paid. Mr. Peake admitted that he was also very much surprised and annoyed at the circumstance, again producing Mr. Graham's letter, and candidly acknowledging, that in his opinion this uncalled-for attempt to rescind the contract, which was none of Grimaldi's seeking, was very paltry. He immediately waited upon Mr. Wroughton and men-

tioned the circumstance, at which he too appeared greatly vexed, although it was not in his power to order the additional sum to be paid. He then mentioned the circumstance to his wife, dwelling upon it with great irritation; but she, observing that it was of no consequence, for they could do very well without it, proposed that, having nothing to do at Drury Lane that night, they should go for an hour or two to Covent Garden.

To this proposition he made no objection; so, as he passed down Bow Street, he called in upon Mr. T. Dibdin for an order, and the conversation happening naturally enough to turn upon theatrical affairs, mentioned what had just occurred at Drury Lane. Mr. Dibdin immediately expressed himself in very strong terms upon the subject, and counselled Grimaldi to withdraw from the theatre, and to accept an engagement at the other house. The advice generated a long conversation between them, which terminated in Grimaldi saying, Mr. Dibdin might, if he pleased, mention the subject to Mr. Harris, and say, if the Management were willing to engage him, he was willing to enter into articles for the following season.

In the course of the evening, he received a note

begging his attendance at Covent Garden on Monday at twelve, and keeping the appointment, was ushered into a room in which were Mr. Harris and John Kemble. The latter greeted him in a very friendly manner, and said,

"Well, Joe, I see you are determined to follow me."

"Yes, sir," replied Grimaldi, who had been thinking of something polite; "you are a living magnet of attraction, Mr. Kemble."

At this, Mr. Harris laughed and congratulated the tragedian on receiving so handsome a compliment. Kemble inquired of Grimaldi whether he knew Mr. Harris, and receiving a reply in the negative, introduced him to that gentleman as "Joe Grimaldi," whose father he had known well, who was a true chip of the old block, and the first low comedian in the country.

Mr. Harris said a great many fine things in reply to these commendations, and, rising, requested Grimaldi to follow him into an adjoining apartment. He did so, and in less than a quarter of an hour had signed articles for five seasons; the terms being, for the first season, six pounds per week; for the second and third, seven pounds; and

for the fourth and fifth, eight pounds. Independent of these emoluments, he had several privileges reserved to him, among which, was the very important one of permission to play at Sadlers Wells, as he had theretofore done. These arrangements being concluded, he took his leave, greatly satisfied with the improved position in which he stood, as up to that time he had only received four pounds per week at Drury Lane.

In the evening, he had to play "Pan" in the ballet at Drury. When he had dressed for the part, he entered the green-room, which was pretty full of ladies and gentlemen, among whom was Mr. Graham, who the moment he saw him, inquired if a report that had reached him of Mr. Grimaldi's going to Covent Garden for the following season were correct. Grimaldi replied in the affirmative, adding, that he was engaged at the other house not only for the following season, but for the four ensuing seasons.

Mr. Graham started up in a state of considerable excitement on hearing this, and addressed the performers present, at considerable length, expatiating in strong language upon what he termed "Grimaldi's ingratitude" in leaving the theatre.

Grimaldi waited patiently until he had concluded, and then, addressing himself to the same auditors, made a counter-statement, in which he recapitulated the whole of the circumstances as they had actually occurred. When he came to mention Mr. Graham's letter to Mr. Peake the treasurer, the former hastily interrupted him by demanding, what letter he referred to.

"The letter," replied Grimaldi, "in which you empowered Mr. Peake to pay the increased salary for the whole of the season."

"If Mr. Peake showed you that letter," replied Mr. Graham in a great passion, "Mr. Peake is a fool for his pains."

"Mr. Peake," rejoined Grimaldi, "is a gentleman, sir, and a man of honour, and, I am quite certain, disdains being made a party to any such unworthy conduct as you have pursued towards me."

A rather stormy scene followed, from which Grimaldi came off victorious; Barrymore and others taking up his cause so vigorously, that Mr. Graham at length postponed any further discussion and walked away. Enough having taken place, however, to enable him to foresee

that his longer stay at Drury Lane would only be productive of constant discomfort to himself, he gave notice to Mr. Graham on the following morning of his intention to leave the theatre on the ensuing Saturday week. This resolve gave rise to another battle between Mr. Graham and himself, in the course of which he was pleased to say, that he could not play the ballet without him, and, consequently, that if he left, he would bring an action against him for loss incurred by its not being performed. Grimaldi, however, firmly adhered to his original resolution: acting therein upon the advice of Mr. Hughes, who strenuously counselled him by no means to depart from it.

Considering himself now at perfect liberty until Easter, he entered into an engagement to perform at Astley's theatre in Dublin, which had just been taken for a short period by Messrs. Charles and Thomas Dibdin. These gentlemen had engaged the greater part of the Sadlers Wells company, including Bologna and his wife (who had been engaged by Mr. Harris for the next season at Covent Garden on the same day as Grimaldi himself), and they offered Grimaldi fourteen guineas a week for himself and two for his wife, half a

clear benefit at the end of the season, and all his travelling expenses both by land and sea.

On the 5th of November he closed his engagement at Drury Lane, performing "Pan," in the ballet of Terpsichore. He started on the following morning, accompanied by his wife, for Dublin, leaving his little son, who was in very weak health, at home. They had a very tedious journey to Holyhead, and a very stormy one from thence to Dublin, experiencing the usual troubles from cold, sickness, fatigue, and otherwise, by the way. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dibdin, who had arrived first, received them with much cordiality and kindness; and they took lodgings at the house of a Mr. Davis, in Peter Street.

On Monday, November the 18th, the theatre opened, and their career was for some time eminently successful—as long, indeed, as the fine weather lasted; but no sooner did the rainy weather set in, than the manager discovered, to his horror and surprise, that the roof of the theatre, being in a dilapidated condition, was not water-proof. At length, one night towards the end of December, a very heavy rain coming down during the performances, actually drove the au-

dience out of the house. The water descended in torrents into the pit and boxes: some people who were greatly interested in the performances put up their umbrellas, and others put on great-coats and shawls; but at length it came down so heavily upon the stage, that the performers themselves were obliged to disappear. In a few minutes the stage was covered, the scenery soaked through, the pit little better than a well, and the boxes and gallery streaming with water.

This unforeseen occurrence threw both literally and figuratively a damp upon the performances which there was no recovering. From that time, with the single exception of one evening, the theatre was deserted. Tarpaulings and all kinds of cheap remedies were tried, but they all failed in producing their intended effect. They never kept the water out, or drew the company in. As to any thorough repair of the roof, it was wholly out of the question; for the Dibdins only held the theatre until March, and the necessary repairs under this head alone would have cost at the very least 200*l.*

In this state of things, Mr. Charles Dibdin was compelled to write to London for remittances

wherewith to pay his company. Knowing exactly how he was situated, Grimaldi volunteered his services in the only way in which he could render them, and offered not to send to the treasury for his salary, but to leave it to be paid whenever the manager might appoint after their return to London. This offer, it is almost unnecessary to add, was gratefully accepted.

About the middle of January, Mr. Jones, the manager of the Crow Street Theatre, hearing how badly the Astley's people were doing, and yet finding that, bad as their business was, it injured his, made an offer to Mr. Dibdin to take his company off his hands at the terms upon which he had originally engaged them and for the remainder of the time specified in their articles, and further to make some pecuniary compensation to Mr. Dibdin himself. The manager assembled the company on the stage, after their having had the mortification of playing to an empty house, on Tuesday, January the 28th, and communicated this offer to them, and earnestly urged upon them the acceptance of the proposal, as the only means by which himself and his brother could hope to recover any portion of the losses they had already

sustained. Grimaldi at once expressed his readiness to accede to the proposition, and used his utmost influence with the other members of the company to induce them to do the like. He succeeded, except in the case of two of the performers, who preferred returning at once to England.

When this was arranged to the satisfaction of all parties, Mr. Dibdin announced his intention to close the theatre on the next Saturday, February the 1st. Grimaldi took the opportunity of inquiring what was to become of his half-benefit which had been agreed upon. The manager replied, with a melancholy smile, that he might give him anything he liked for *his* half — twenty pounds would do, and he should have the entire house next Saturday. Grimaldi immediately paid the twenty pounds, and on the following morning commenced making preparations for his benefit, having barely four days in which to announce the performances and sell his tickets.

He had borne an introductory letter to Captain Trench, whose unvarying kindness to him on every possible occasion he most gratefully acknowledged, and to this gentleman he first mentioned

his intention of taking a benefit. He also mentioned it to his landlord. Their replies were characteristic.

"Let me have a hundred box-tickets," said Captain Trench: "keep the two centre boxes for me. If I want any more tickets, I 'll send for them: but here 's the money for the hundred."

"Give me a hundred pit-tickets," said the landlord. "If I can sell more, I will: but here is the money for them."

He had his bills printed and well circulated, but did no more business until the Saturday morning, which made him uneasy; though the fact simply was, that the people were waiting to see how the weather would turn out: very well knowing that if it were a wet night, the theatre would be the very worst place in which to encounter the rain. Fortune, however, was propitious: the day was cloudless, fair, and beautiful; and the result was, that after having at nine o'clock in the morning no one place taken except the two boxes bespoken by Captain Trench, at one o'clock in the afternoon not a single place remained unlet. At one time, when there was no doubt of the weather remaining dry, there were no fewer than sixteen

carriages standing before his door, the owners of which were all anxious to obtain places, and all of whom he was reluctantly compelled to disappoint.

The receipts of the house amounted to one hundred and ninety-seven pounds nineteen shillings, not to mention a variety of presents, including a magnificent gold snuff-box, from Captain Trench, which was worth, in weight alone, more than thirty pounds sterling.

This purchase of Dibdin's half of the benefit for twenty pounds was not only a very fortunate thing for Grimaldi, but was, on the other hand, in some degree serviceable to Dibdin also, inasmuch as it enabled Grimaldi to oblige him with a loan of one hundred pounds, of which at that moment, in consequence of his undeserved misfortunes, he stood much in need. This advance, together with salary due and other matters, left Mr. Dibdin indebted to Grimaldi in the sum of one hundred and ninety-six pounds, the whole of which was honorably repaid a few months afterwards.

This benefit closed the season of the "wet" Theatre in Peter Street; and on the following Monday, Grimaldi and the greater part of the London company appeared at the Crow Street

Theatre, where they acted until the 29th of March. One circumstance is sufficient to show that the performances were unusually successful, which is, that the two pieces in which he came out,—namely, "Harlequin Esop," and "Coa and Zoa, or the Rival Indians,"—were found quite attractive enough for the whole period. He did not appear in any other part, even for a single night, during the whole of his engagement.

On Sunday, March the 30th, they packed up, and at ten o'clock in the evening of Monday went on board the packet in which they had taken their berths to Holyhead, after receiving the warmest and kindest hospitality from every person they had encountered in Dublin. With only one letter of introduction, Grimaldi had found himself in the course of a few days surrounded by friends whose hospitality and cordiality, not only of profession, but of action, were beyond all bounds; one would invite him to dinner, and be personally affronted by his not dining with him every day, another who wished to pay him a similar attention, but whose dinner-hour would have interfered with the rehearsal, only gave up his claim upon the condition that his wife and himself should dine with

him every Sunday; a third placed a jaunting-car at his disposal, and sent it to his door at seven o'clock every morning; and a fourth expected him to meet a small party at supper regularly every night. He had heard and read a great deal of Irish hospitality, but had formed no conception of its extent and heartiness until he experienced its effects in his own person.

He was much struck, as most Englishmen are, by the enormous consumption of whisky-punch, and the facility with which the good folks of Dublin swallow tumbler after tumbler of it, without any visible symptoms of intoxication. He entertained a theory that some beverage of equal strength, to which they were unaccustomed, would be as trying to them as their whisky-punch was to him, (for he was always afraid of a second tumbler of toddy,) and, with a view of putting it to the proof, gave a little party at his lodgings on Twelfth Night, and compounded some good strong English rum-punch, with rather more than a dash of brandy in it. He considers that the experiment was eminently successful, asserting that one-fourth of the quantity which the guests would have drunk with complete impunity, had it been

their ordinary beverage, quite overset them; and states with great glee, that Mr. Davis, his landlord, who could drink his seven tumblers of whisky-punch and go to bed afterwards rather dull from excessive sobriety, was carried up stairs after one tumbler of the new composition decidedly drunk. We are inclined to think, however, that Mr. Davis had been taking a few tumblers of whisky-punch in his own parlour before he went up stairs to qualify himself for the party, and that the success of the experiment is not sufficiently well established to justify us in impressing it on the public mind without the addition of this trifling qualification.

CHAPTER XII.

1806 to 1807.

He returns to town, gets frozen to the roof of a coach on the road, and pays his rent twice over when he arrives at home. —Mr. Charles Farley.—His first appearance at Covent Garden.—Valentine and Orson.—Production of Mother Goose, and its immense success.—The mysterious Adventure of the Six Ladies and the Six Gentlemen.

They were six days getting back to London, the weather being very inclement, and the travelling very indifferent. Through a mistake of the booking-office keeper, Grimaldi had to travel the earlier portion of the road from Holyhead outside the coach. The cold was so intense and the frost so severe, that he actually got frozen to his seat; and when the coach arrived at Red Landford, it was with some difficulty that he was lifted off, and conveyed into an inn in a complete state of exhaustion and helplessness. His feet were bathed in brandy, and various other powerful stimulants applied with the view of restoring sus-

perfect circulation, but several hours elapsed before he recovered, and it was not until the following morning that he was enabled to resume his journey towards London, where he at length arrived without further hindrance or accident.

He had no sooner returned to town than an unpleasant circumstance occurred, as if in especial illustration of his often-urged remark, that he never had a sum of money but some unforeseen demand was made upon him, or some extraordinary exigency arose.

He had been one morning to the City on business, and was somewhat amazed upon his return to find a broker and his assistant in the best parlour, engaged in coolly taking an inventory of his goods and chattels.

"What on earth is the meaning of this?" he inquired.

"Only an execution for rent," replied the broker, continuing his instructions to his amanuensis: "Mirror in gilt frame, Villiam."

The tenant replied that it was quite impossible, and searching among his papers, found and produced the receipt for his rent.

The broker looked it over with a cheerful smile,

and then, with many legal phrases, proceeded to apprise him that the landlord himself was but a lessee, and that, in consequence of his not having paid his rent, the head landlord had determined to seize upon whatever property was found upon the premises.

Greatly annoyed at this information, he hurried to Mr. Hughes, his constant adviser in all difficulties, to consult with him. Having narrated the affair, Mr. Hughes asked what was the amount claimed.

"Eighty-four pounds."

"Well then, Joe," said he, "you must pay it or lose your furniture."

Accordingly he returned home very indignant, and handed over the specified sum to the broker, who said nothing could be more satisfactory, and walked away accompanied by his assistant.

The next morning the landlord came, and being ushered in, expressed much trouble in his countenance, and said that he was very glad to see Mr. Grimaldi and such a fine morning together.

"But I beg your pardon," he added; "I don't think you know me."

Grimaldi replied, that unless he was the gentle-

man who had imposed upon him the necessity of paying his rent twice over, he had not the pleasure of his acquaintance. At which remark the landlord assumed a very penitent and disconsolate visage, declared his sorrow for what had occurred, and, as some slight reparation for the loss and wrong, proposed to assign the lease to him. Grimaldi under all the circumstances was extremely glad to accede to the proposal, and cheerfully paid all the legal expenses contingent upon the transfer.

The upshot of the matter was, that, a very short time afterwards, he received another communication from the same landlord, in which he imparted the very unexpected fact, that either party to the lease had a discretionary power of cancelling it at that period if he thought proper, and that he intended to avail himself of the clause, unless indeed Mr. Grimaldi would prefer retaining the house at an advanced rent, which he was at liberty to do if he pleased. An inspection of the deed proved but too clearly that this statement was correct; so the eighty-four pounds were lost, together with the legal charges for the assignment of the lease and the costs of

the execution: and the burden of an increased rent was imposed upon the unlucky tenant into the bargain.

His old articles at Sadlers Wells expiring this year, he entered into a fresh engagement, under which he bound himself to that theatre for three years, at a weekly salary of twelve pounds and two clear benefits. The pantomime produced at Easter was entitled "Harlequin and the Forty Virgins," and proved remarkably successful, running indeed through the whole of the season. In this piece he sang a song called "Me and my Neddy," which afterwards became highly popular and was in everybody's mouth. Several presents were made to him by admirers of his performance, and, among others, a very handsome watch, the face of which was so contrived as to represent a portrait of himself in the act of singing the romantic ditty just mentioned.

All this season the pantomime was played first, which arrangement released him at half-past eight o'clock, thus affording him an opportunity, which he enjoyed for the first time in his life, of being abroad in the evening, in the spring and summer of the year. During the greater portion of his

life in those seasons, he had entered Sadlers Wells every night at six o'clock, and remained there until twelve. The novelty of being at liberty before it was yet dark was so great, that he scarcely knew what to do with himself, sometimes strolling about the streets in perfect astonishment at finding himself there, and then turning home in pure lack of employment.

On the opening of Covent Garden Theatre in October, he became first acquainted with Mr. Farley, between whom and himself a very warm and sincere friendship ever after existed. This gentleman inquired in what character he would wish to make his first appearance. He mentioned Scaramouch in Don Juan, which had been one of his most successful parts at the other house; but Mr. Farley suggested Orson, in Valentine and Orson, urging that the drama, which had not been acted for several years, had been very popular with the town, and that Orson was a character well suited to his abilities, in which it was very probable he would make a great hit. Grimaldi at once consented to play the part, merely requesting that Mr. Farley would be good enough to give him some instruction in it, as

he had never seen any portion of the piece and was at some loss how to study the character. Mr. Farley readily agreed to do so, and faithfully kept his word.

It has been sometimes said, and indeed stated in print, that Grimaldi was a pupil and copyist of Dubois. No greater mistake can be made: if he can be said to have been the pupil of anybody, Mr. Farley was certainly his master, as he not only took infinite pains to instruct him in the character of Orson, but afterwards gave him very valuable advice and great assistance in getting up many other parts, in which he was also highly successful.

He was very anxious about his first appearance at Covent Garden, and studied Orson with great assiduity and application for some time. He made his first appearance in the character on the 10th of October 1806, Farley playing Valentine. The piece, which was revived with most decided success, was acted nearly every night until the production of the pantomime at Christmas rendered its withdrawal imperative.

The part of Orson was in Grimaldi's opinion the most difficult he ever had to play; the multitude of passions requiring to be portrayed, and

the rapid succession in which it was necessary to present them before the spectators, involving an unusual share both of mental and physical exertion upon the part of the performer. He played this character both in town and country on many occasions, but the effect produced upon him by the exertions of the last scene of the first act was always the same. As soon as the act-drop fell, he would stagger off the stage into a small room behind the prompter's box, and there sinking into an arm-chair, give full vent to the emotions which he found it impossible to suppress. He would sob and cry aloud, and suffer so much from violent and agonizing spasms, that those about him, accustomed as they at length became to the distressing scene, were very often in doubt, up to the very moment of his being "called," whether he would be able to go upon the stage for the second act. He never failed, however; extraordinary as his sufferings were, his fear of not being ready as the time for his call approached, and the exertions he made to conquer those painful feelings, invariably enabled him to rally at the necessary time,—a curious instance of the power of habit in enabling him to struggle successfully with the weaknesses which no length of habit, and no re-

petition of the same part, however frequent, were sufficient to banish.

The effect produced on the audience by his personation of this character was intense; it enhanced his reputation greatly, bringing him before the public in quite a new line. The compliments and congratulations which he received from persons ranking high in his own profession, in literature, and in the fine arts, bore high testimony to the merit and striking character of this singular performance.

Preparations now began to be made for the production of "Mother Goose," destined to acquire a degree of popularity quite unprecedented in the history of pantomime, and to occupy a place in the choicest recollections of the play-goers of the time.

At Drury Lane, the Management, well knowing that great preparations were making at Covent Garden for the production of a new harlequinade on the 26th of December, and dreading the advantage they had gained in securing Grimaldi, hurried on the preparations for their own pantomime, and engaging Montgomery, who had acquired some celebrity at the Circus, at a high salary, to play Clown, produced their pantomime on the

23rd, thus gaining an advantage of three days over the other house. The piece, however, partook infinitely more of the character of a spectacle than a pantomime: the scenery and tricks were good, but the "business," as it is technically termed, was so wretched, that the audience began to hiss before it was half over, and eventually grew so clamorous, that it was deemed prudent to drop the curtain, long before the intended conclusion of the piece. Grimaldi and his friend Bologna were present, and were very far from regretting this failure. Up to that time Drury Lane had always been more successful in pantomime than the other house; and there is little doubt, that the production of this unsuccessful but very splendid piece, three days before the usual time, was intended not merely to crush the pantomime in preparation at Covent Garden, but Grimaldi too, if possible.

They had a night rehearsal of "Mother Goose" on the ensuing evening, and the performers were in a state of great anxiety and uncertainty as to its fate. It had always been the custom to render a pantomime the vehicle for the display of gorgeous scenery and splendid dresses; on the last scene especially, the energies of every person in

the theatre connected with the decoration of the stage were profusely lavished, the great question with the majority of the town being which pantomime had the finest conclusion. Mother Goose had none of these accessories; it had neither gorgeous processions, nor gaudy banners, nor splendid scenery, nor showy dresses. There was not even a spangle used in the piece, with the exception of those which decked the Harlequin's jacket, and even they would have been dispensed with but for Grimaldi's advice. The last scene too was as plain as possible, and the apprehensions of the performers were proportionately rueful.

But all these doubts were speedily set at rest; for on the production of the pantomime on the 26th of December 1806, it was received with the most deafening shouts of applause, and played for ninety-two nights, being the whole remainder of the season. The houses it drew were immense; the doors were no sooner open than the theatre was filled: and every time it was played the applause seemed more uproarious than before — another instance of the bad judgment of actors in matters appertaining to their craft. "She stoops to Conquer" was doomed by the actors to

inevitable failure up to the very moment when the performances commenced, (although in this case many eminent literary men and critics of the time held the same opinion;) and "The Honey Moon" lay neglected on the manager's shelf for many years, it being considered impossible that an audience would be found to sit out its representation.

Grimaldi's opinion of Mother Goose—it may or may not be another instance of the bad judgment of actors—always remained pretty much the same, notwithstanding its great success. He considered the pantomime, as a whole, a very indifferent one, and always declared his own part to be one of the worst he ever played; nor was there a trick or situation in the piece to which he had not been well accustomed for many years before. However this may be, there is little doubt that the exertions of Bologna and himself, as Harlequin and Clown, contributed in a very important degree to the success of the piece; it being worthy of remark, that whenever the pantomime has been played without the original Harlequin and Clown, it has invariably gone off flatly, and generally failed to draw.

On the 9th of June he took a benefit in conjunc-

tion with Bologna, upon which occasion Mother Goose was played for the eighty-second time. The receipts amounted to 679*l.* 18*s.*

During the run of this pantomime he fell curiously into a new and mysterious circle of acquaintance. The mystery which overhung them, the manner of his introduction, their style of living, and his subsequent discovery of their rank and title, are not a little curious.

On the 6th of January 1807, a gentleman called at his house in Baynes Row, and desiring to see him, was shown into the parlour. In this person he was surprised to recognise his quondam friend Mackintosh who owned the preserves. He apologised for calling, entered into conversation with great ease, and trusted that the little trick he had played in mere thoughtlessness might be completely forgiven. Being courteously requested not to trouble himself by referring to it, Mr. Mackintosh went on to say, that his mother had sold, not her mangle, but her inn, and had retired to a distant part of the country; while he himself, having attached himself to business, had come to reside permanently in London, and had taken a house and offices in Throgmorton Street, in the City.

Mr. Mackintosh's appearance was extremely smart, his manners were greatly improved, and altogether he had acquired much polish and refinement since the days of the chaise-cart and the fustian jacket. As, notwithstanding the absurd scrape into which he had led his guests, he had treated them very hospitably, Grimaldi invited him to dine on the following Sunday. He came in due course; his conversation was jocose and amusing, and becoming a favourite at the house, he frequently dined or supped there: Grimaldi and his wife occasionally doing the same with him in Throgmorton Street, where he had a very business-looking establishment, plainly but genteelly furnished.

About a month after his first calling, he waited upon Grimaldi one morning, and said that some friends of his residing in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, were very anxious to make his acquaintance, and wished much for his company at supper one evening after he had finished at the theatre. Grimaldi, who if he had accepted all the invitations he received at this period would have had very little time for his profession, parried the request for some time, alleging that he was a very

domestic person, and that he preferred adhering to his old custom of supping at home with his wife after the play. Mackintosh, however, urged that his friends were very wealthy people, that he would find them very useful and profitable acquaintances, and by these and a thousand other persuasions overcame his disinclination to go. He consented, and an evening was fixed for the visit.

On the appointed night, as soon as he had finished at the theatre, he called a coach and directed the driver to set him down at the address which Mackintosh had given him. The coach stopped before a very large house, apparently handsomely furnished, and brilliantly lighted up. Not having any idea that the man could possess friends who lived in such style, he at first supposed that the driver had made a mistake; but while they were discussing the point, Mackintosh, elegantly dressed, darted out of the passage, and, taking his arm, conducted him into a brilliant supper-room.

If the outside of the house had given him cause for astonishment, its internal appearance redoubled his surprise. Everything was on a scale of the most costly splendour: the spacious rooms

were elegantly papered and gilded, elegant chandeliers depended from the ceilings, the richest carpets covered the floors, and the other furniture too, was of the most expensive description. The supper comprised a choice variety of luxuries and was splendidly served; the costliest wines of various kinds and vintages sparkled upon the table.

There were just twelve persons in the supper-room, besides Mackintosh and himself: to wit six ladies and six gentlemen, who were all introduced as married people. The first couple to whom he was introduced were of course the host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Farmer, who welcomed him with enchanting urbanity and condescension. Every member of the party was beautifully dressed; the ladies wore jewellery of the most brilliant description, the numerous attendants were in handsome liveries, and the whole scene was so totally different from anything he had anticipated that he was thoroughly bewildered, and actually began to doubt the reality of what he saw. The politeness of the gentlemen and the graceful ease of the ladies, however, soon restored his self-possession; while the delicious flavour of the wines and

dishes convinced him that with respect to that part of the business, at all events, he was labouring under no delusion.

In eating, drinking, singing, and story-telling the night wore on till past five o'clock, when he was at length suffered to return home. A recital of all the circumstances astonished his wife not a little; and he was quite as much amazed at recollecting what he had seen, as she at hearing of it.

A few days afterward, Mackintosh called again; hoped he had enjoyed himself, was delighted to hear he had, and bore an invitation for the next night.

To this Grimaldi urged all the objections he had before mentioned, and added to them an expression of his unwillingness to leave his wife at home. Mr. Mackintosh, with great forethought, had mentioned this in Charlotte Street; he was commissioned to invite her, Mrs. Farmer trusting she would come in a friendly way and excuse the formality of her calling.

Well, there was no resisting this; so Grimaldi and his wife went to Charlotte Street next night, and there were the rooms, and the six ladies and

the six gentlemen, and the chandeliers, and the wax-lights, and the liveries, and, what was more to the purpose than all, the supper, all over again.

There were several other parties after this; and then the six ladies and the six gentlemen *would* come and see Mr. Grimaldi at his own house,—whereat Mrs. Grimaldi was rather vexed, inasmuch as they had not one quarter so many spoons as the Charlotte Street people, and no chandeliers at all. However, they were polite enough to say, that they had never spent a more delightful evening; and as they talked and laughed very much, and were very friendly and kind, the visit passed off to the admiration of all parties.

There was some mystery about these great friends which the worthy couple were quite unable to solve. It did not appear that they were connected by any other ties than those of friendship, and yet they were always together, and never had a stranger among them; there were always the same six ladies and the same six gentlemen, the only change being in their dresses, which varied in make and colour, but never in quality. Then they did not seem to be in any

business; and there was a something in the politeness of the gentlemen and the jocoseness of the ladies which struck them as rather peculiar, although they could never tell what it was. Grimaldi saw that they were not like the noblemen and gentlemen he was in the habit of meeting in the green-rooms of the theatres; and yet, notwithstanding that he pondered upon the matter a great deal, he could not for the life of him discover in what the difference consisted. His wife was in just the same state of perplexity; but although they talked the matter over very often, they never arrived at any tangible conclusion. While they were thinking about it, the parties kept going on, and January and February passed away.

On the 13th of March he had promised to act, in conjunction with Messrs. Bartley, Simmons, Chapman, and Louis Bologna, at the Woolwich Theatre, for the benefit of Mr. Laud. Chancing to mention the circumstance at one of the Charlotte Street parties a few days before the time, Mr. Farmer immediately proposed that he and the other five gentlemen should accompany their excellent friend; that they should all sup together

at Woolwich after the theatre was over, and return to town next day. This was immediately agreed to, by all the party except one gentleman, with the uncommon name of Jones, who had an appointment with a nobleman, which it was impossible to postpone.

The five gentlemen were punctual, and they, Mackintosh, and Grimaldi, started together. They dined at Woolwich, and afterwards adjourned to the theatre, where the five gentlemen and Mackintosh went into the boxes, and Grimaldi upon the stage. The five gentlemen talked very loud, and applauded very much; and their magnificent appearance created quite a sensation, not only among the audience, but the actors also. They supped together at the hotel at which they had dined: slept there, and returned to town next day; Mr. Farmer and the four gentlemen coming home in a barouche; Mackintosh, Grimaldi, and some other professional persons preferring to walk, for the benefit of the exercise.

Upon the way, Grimaldi sounded Mackintosh relative to the professions, connexions, and prospects of his friends; but he evaded making any reply, further than by observing, with an air of

great respect, that they were very wealthy people. He dined in Throgmorton Street a few days afterwards, and again tried to penetrate the mystery, as did his wife, who accompanied him. Mr. Mackintosh threw no light upon it, but it was destined to be shortly revealed, as the next volume will show.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

00024372

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016